BIG
SPIRITS
COMICS
SPECIAL

竹光侍

His sword must be bamboo!

たけみつざむらい

七

松本大洋
【作】永福一成

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TAKEMITSU ZAMURAI

ART BY
MATSUMOTO
TAIYOU
STORY BY
EIFUKU ISSEI

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【ネーム】保坂孝幸

BIG SPIRITS COMICS SPECIAL

目次

【第六十一話】大村崎十三の覚悟 …… 三
【第六十二話】武部兵部之介の思ひ出 …… 二三
【第六十三話】河原に三匹 …… 四二
【第六十四話】雨 …… 六一
【第六十五話】花 …… 七九
【第六十六話】闇の鬼 …… 九七
【第六十七話】薬種問屋　乱闘の顛末 …… 一一五
【第六十八話】森佐々太郎の決意 …… 一三二
【第六十九話】舟の人 …… 一五一
【第七十話】落　日 …… 一六九

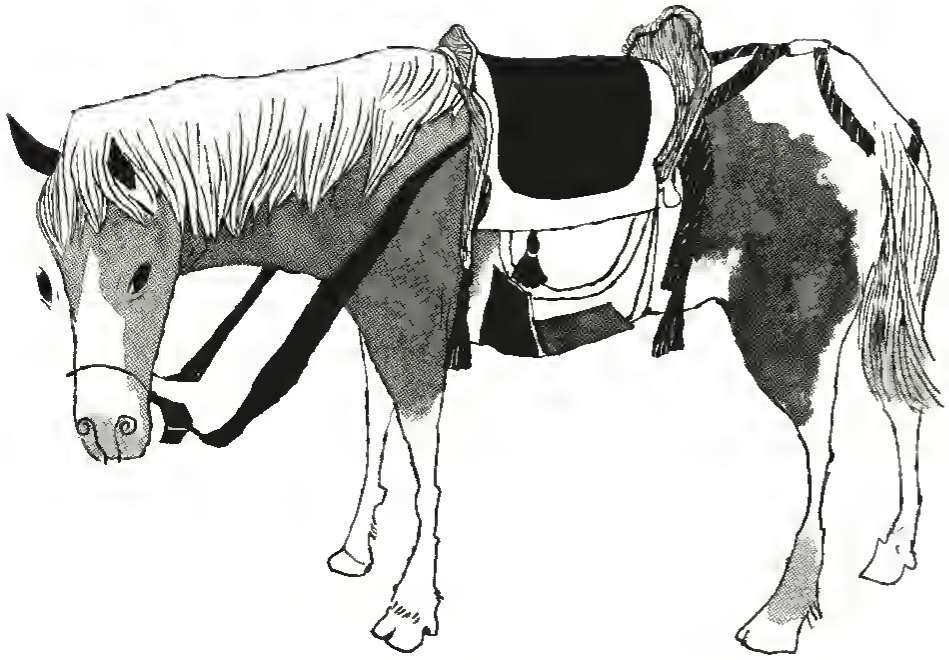
- CHAPTER 61
OOMURASAKI JUUZOU'S RESOLUTION

GYAAA!

ぎゃあああ

DEAR, THE SERVANTS ARE WORRIED ABOUT YOUR SHOUTS AND MOANS
HM?
THE SUN WILL RISE SHORTLY
IT'S JUST THE USUAL DREAM
SEN-DAI

I'VE DECIDED TO GO TO EDO SOON.
BUT THERE'S STILL QUITE A BIT OF SNOW LEFT ON THE ROAD TO EDO...
.....
BUT I'VE DECIDED TO GO.
YES, YOU'RE RIGHT...



CHAPTER 61
OMURASAKI JUUZOU'S RESOLUTION

FATHER...
WHAT IS IT, SAE?
I HEARD THAT YOU'D BE MAKING A TRIP TO EDO SOON
YES, AND?
I WAS THINKING OF WRITING A LETTER TO MORI THERE
森
佐々
太郎
MORI SAZATAROU

MORI IS DIFFERENT FROM YOU, FATHER.
SHE'S QUITE A PERCEPTIVE CHILD.
SHE'S ACTUALLY RATHER WORRIED IF SOMETHING UNFORTU-NATE MIGHT HAPPEN TO YOU ON YOUR VISIT TO EDO.
THAT MORI SURE IS TAKING HIS TIME WITH HIS TASK...
I WONDER IF HE'S NOT JUST HANGING AROUND WITH THE WRONG ILK AT EDO...?

THEY NEED NOT BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE ELDERLY.
THE YOUNG ARE BETTER OFF WORRYING ABOUT THEMSELVES.
ピ°

AT THE TATEISHI FIEF OF SHINANO PROVINCE, THE TAKI HOUSE SHAKES.
EVER SINCE THE EXISTENCE OF LORD TAKI'S ILLEGITIMATE SON CAME TO LIGHT, THE TAKI HOUSE HAD SPLIT IN TWO
ON THE OTHER SIDE WERE THOSE WHO SUPPORTED THE LORD'S ILLEGITIMATE SON AS THE NEXT HEIR...
THOSE WHO SUPPORTED THE LORD'S NEPHEW TOYOMARU AS THE NEXT HEIR, LED BY THE SECOND-IN-LINE KAROU: OMURASAKI JUUZOU

JUUZOU IS PLANNING TO GO TO EDO?
WHAT?
LED BY HEAD KAROU: TAKEBE HYOUBUNOSUKE
THE ONLY PLACE HE WOULD HAVE ANY INFLUENCE IS THE RED-LIGHT DISTRICT!
HMPH!
APPARENTLY THERE WAS SOME PROBLEM WITH THE PROMISSORY NOTE WRITTEN BY OUR ACCOUNTANT AT EDO SO HE SAID HE WOULD GO STRAIGHTEN IT OUT SINCE HE HAS SOME INFLUENCE OVER THERE
HE SEES THAT BOY AS HIS IRRECONCILABLE ENEMY...
THAT WOULD MOST LIKELY BE THE CASE.
PERHAPS HE INTENDS TO BRING AN END TO THE ILLEGITIMATE SON ONCE AND FOR ALL?

PARDON?
HMM...
WHERE IS JUUZOU AT THE MOMENT?
HE IS IN THE MIDDLE OF A SNOWBALL FIGHT OUT IN THE COURTYARD.
HAHAHA

I KNOW JUST THE WORD THAT DESCRIBES A MAN LIKE HIM.
ぐぬぅう
お
お
お
THE TYPE OF MAN THAT I DESPISE MOST.
A GREAT FOOL.

すんすん
COME ON, EAT.
IT'S DRIED PERSIM-MON.
むちゃ
WHAT DO YOU THINK? TASTY, RIGHT? HAHA...
COUGH!
...
MY LORD!

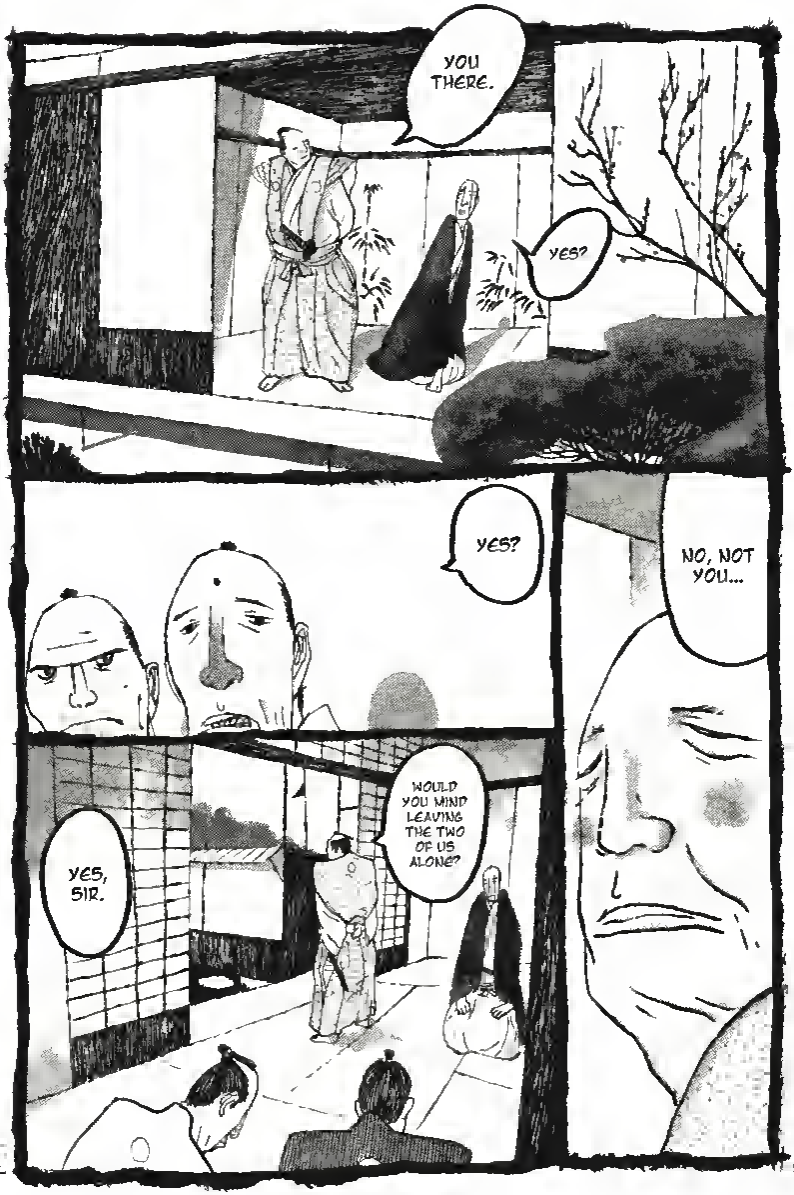
MY LORD!
CALL A DOCTOR! QUICKLY!
AT THE TATEISHI FIEF OF SHINANO PROVINCE, THE TAKI HOUSE SHAKES.

TAKEBE HYOUBUNOSUKE'S RECOLLECTIONS

CHAPTER 62

TAKEBE HYOUBUNOSUKE'S RECOLLECTIONS

THE LEAST I COULD DO IS BE THE ONE TO COME OVER SINCE YOU AGREED TO SEE ME...
ハーイよ
ハーイよ
IT MUST HAVE BEEN QUITE MUDDY ON YOUR WAY OVER.
NO,
NOT PARTICU-LARLY.
SECOND-IN-LINE KAROU OMURASAKI JUUZOU


YOU THERE.
YES?
YES?
NO, NOT YOU...
WOULD YOU MIND LEAVING THE TWO OF US ALONE?
YES, SIR.

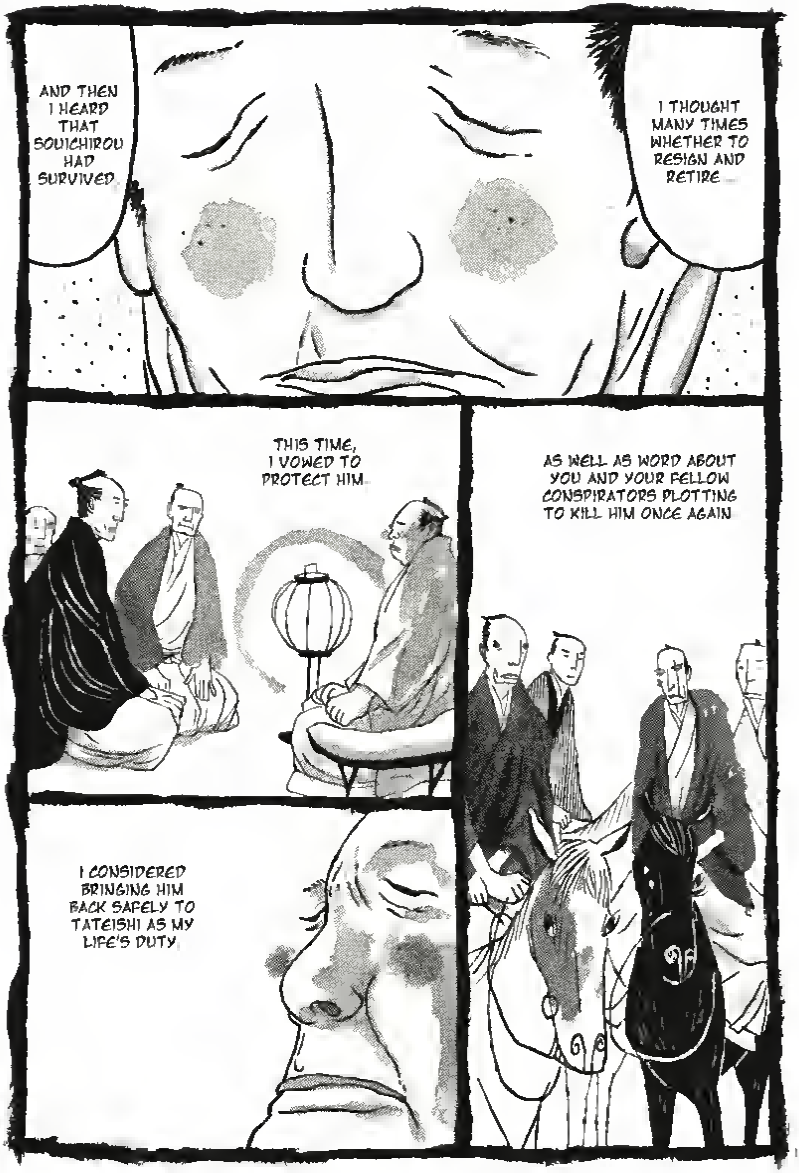
I HEARD YOU WOULD BE HEADING TO EDO, JUUZOU.
HA HA HA HA
AH, YES. THERE'S BEEN SOME DISPUTE BETWEEN OUR ACCOUNTANT AT EDO AND SOME LOCAL BUSINESSMEN AND
!
WILL YOU KILL HIM?
OUR LORD'S SON, THAT IS.

ALLOW ME TO CONFESS TO YOU ABOUT EVERYTHING.
IT WOULD BE BEST TO FINALLY GET IT ALL OUT IN THE OPEN,
CONSIDERING HOW YOU AREN'T THE BEST AT READING MY MIND.
HAS IT REALLY BEEN 5 YEARS ALREADY...?
PUFF
PUFF
SINCE THE NIGHT OF THAT BLIZZARD...

OH, HOW I LOATHED YOU FOR IT...
AND HOW BADLY I BLAMED MYSELF FOR CARELESSLY LETTING THEIR LOCATION SLIP TO YOU...
I CONS-TANTLY THOUGHT OF COMMITTING SUICIDE.

GRAB
TAKING CARE OF THE BOY AND HIS FAMILY HAD ORIGINALLY BEGUN FROM MY WHIMS ALONE.
THOUGH IT MIGHT SEEM TO YOU AND THE OTHERS THAT I WAS UNDERHANDEDLY TRYING TO GAIN THE BOY'S TRUST SO THAT I COULD USE HIM AS MY PUPPET LATER ON,
DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT I, ALREADY THE CHAMBERLAIN AND HEAD KAROU, WOULD REALLY NEED TO RESORT TO SUCH A TACTIC?

OF COURSE NOT.
WHEN I HAD HEARD THEY HAD BEEN SLAUGHTERED BY YOU, I COWARDLY TOOK NO ACTION...
MY DAYS OF [illegible] LOATHING CONTINUED ENDLESSLY.

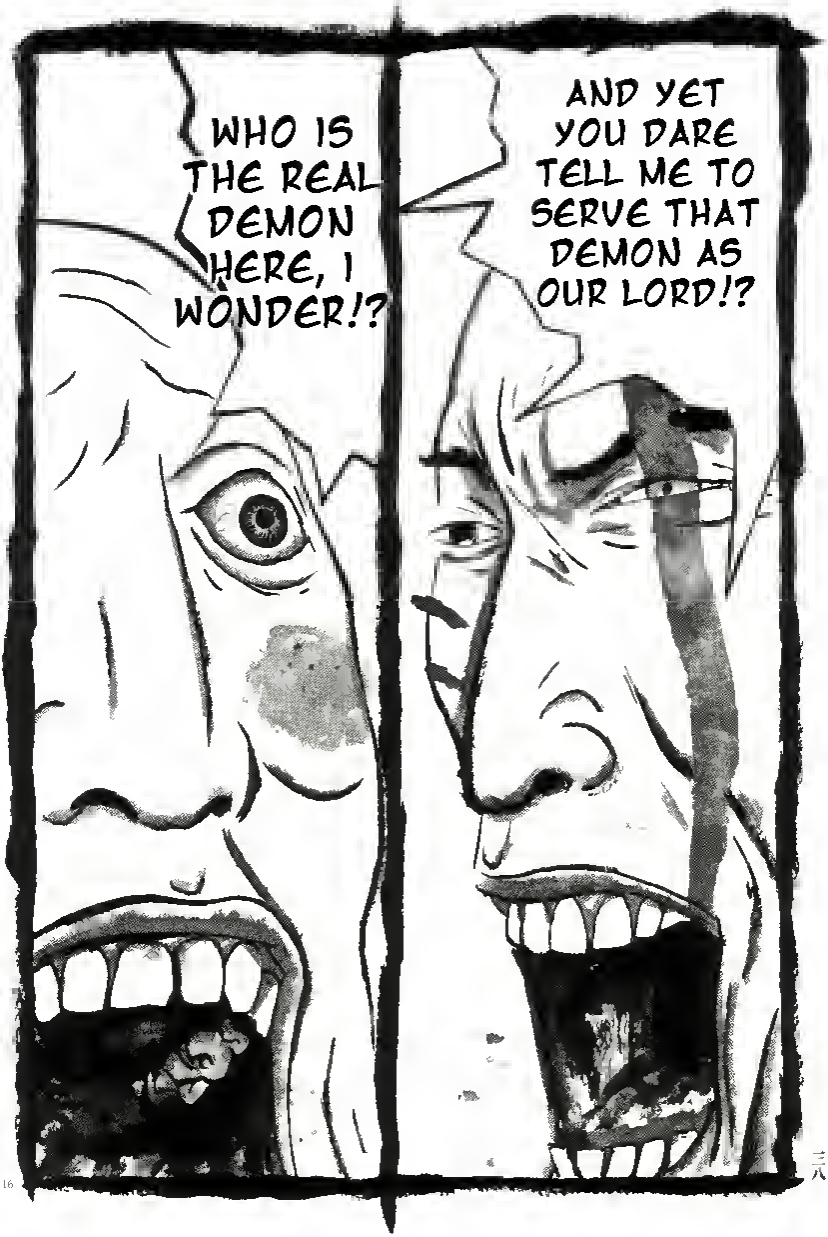

I THOUGHT MANY TIMES WHETHER TO RESIGN AND RETIRE...
AND THEN I HEARD THAT SOUICHIROU HAD SURVIVED.
THIS TIME, I VOWED TO PROTECT HIM.
AS WELL AS WORD ABOUT YOU AND YOUR FELLOW CONSPIRATORS PLOTTING TO KILL HIM ONCE AGAIN.
I CONSIDERED BRINGING HIM BACK SAFELY TO TATEISHI AS MY LIFE'S DUTY.

TRYING TO EVOKE MY SYMPA-THIES?
SADLY, I WAS NEITHER SKILLED TO MAKE SUCH CRAFTY SCHEMES NOR DID I POSSESS THE KIND OF SUBORDINATES YOU HAD. AND THUS YOU REMAINED ONE STEP AHEAD OF ME.
BEING AN UNEDUCATED MAN RAISED IN THE MOUN-TAINS, IT WOULD BE UNREASONABLE TO PLACE HIM AS THE HEIR.
EVEN IF HE IS THE TRUE SON OF OUR LORD, AS YOU CLAIM.
YET DESPITE THAT, IF YOU STILL WISH TO MAKE HIM OUR LORD BY VIRTUE OF HIS BLOOD ALONE,

YOU MUST CONSIDER HIS CONSTITUTION
CONSTITUTION, JUUZOU
..NO.
THEN IT IS TRULY A MOST PITIABLE REASON.
DO YOU REFER TO HIS LINEAGE?
NO
IS THAT ESSENCE WHICH REMAINS CONSTANT IN SPITE OF ONE'S SURROUNDINGS
WHAT I I AM TALKING ABOUT,

IN THE MANY YEARS I SPENT VISITING HIM IN THE MOUNTAINS, I HAVE COME TO KNOW THAT ESSENCE WHICH LIES WITHIN HIM.
AND IT IS ONE CERTAINLY WORTH RISKING ONE'S LIFE FOR—

UNMIS-
TAKABLY
SO.
THE ONE
WHO CUT
DOWN MY
COMRADES
WAS NO
MAN BUT
A DEMON.
A
DEMON
POSS-
ESSED
BY THE
SWORD.
YOU
FIND
THIS
AMU-
SING?
HEH


WHO IS THE REAL DEMON HERE, I WONDER!?
AND YET YOU DARE TELL ME TO SERVE THAT DEMON AS OUR LORD!?

DON'T GO
WHAT'S GOING ON?
JUST SILENTLY WAIT OUT HERE.
SLAUGHTERING AN INNOCENT FAMILY...!
IS THE REAL DEMON NOT YOURSELF JUUZOU!?

I BEG OF YOU, JUUZOU!
PLEASE DO NOT ROB HIM OF HIS LIFE!
HE IS THE GENUINE ARTICLE!

THERE IS NO OTHER WORTHY SUBSTITUTE.

CHAPTER 63

THREE ANIMALS BY THE RIVERBED

ぐぁ
ぐぁ
ぐぁ
ぐぁ
ぐぁ
ぐぁ
……
しょぼ
しょぼ

BOSS, THE BIRDIES SAY A HEAVY RAINFALL'S COMING IN 3 DAYS
GYOHO
MN
MN
じょぼ
じょぼ
THAT'S 3 DAYS FROM TODAY.
THERE GON' BE RAIN 3 DAYS LATER, SAYS THE BIRDIES
YES, I GOT IT, RED EYES.
YOU DON'T NEED TO SAY IT OVER AND OVER AGAIN.
ONCE IS ENOUGH!

YOU KNOW, SOMETIMES, I JUST WANT TO CUT DOWN EVERYTHING IN THIS WORLD.
RAIN IN THREE DAYS...
HMPH
SO WHAT TO DO..
I'LL NEVER HAVE ENOUGH SWORDS TO DO THAT...
BUT TO CUT EVERYONE DOWN IS JUST IMPOSSIBLE NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT...
WHAT'LL YA DO, BOSS?
GYOHO!

AND NEITHER WILL I OR MESHI HERE.
IF BOSS KILLS BOSS, THEN BOSS WILL BE NO MORE...
IT'D BE BEST TO JUST CUT MYSELF DOWN INSTEAD... THEN EVERYTHING WILL FADE AWAY TO NOTHINGNESS
HA HA HA
GYOHO!

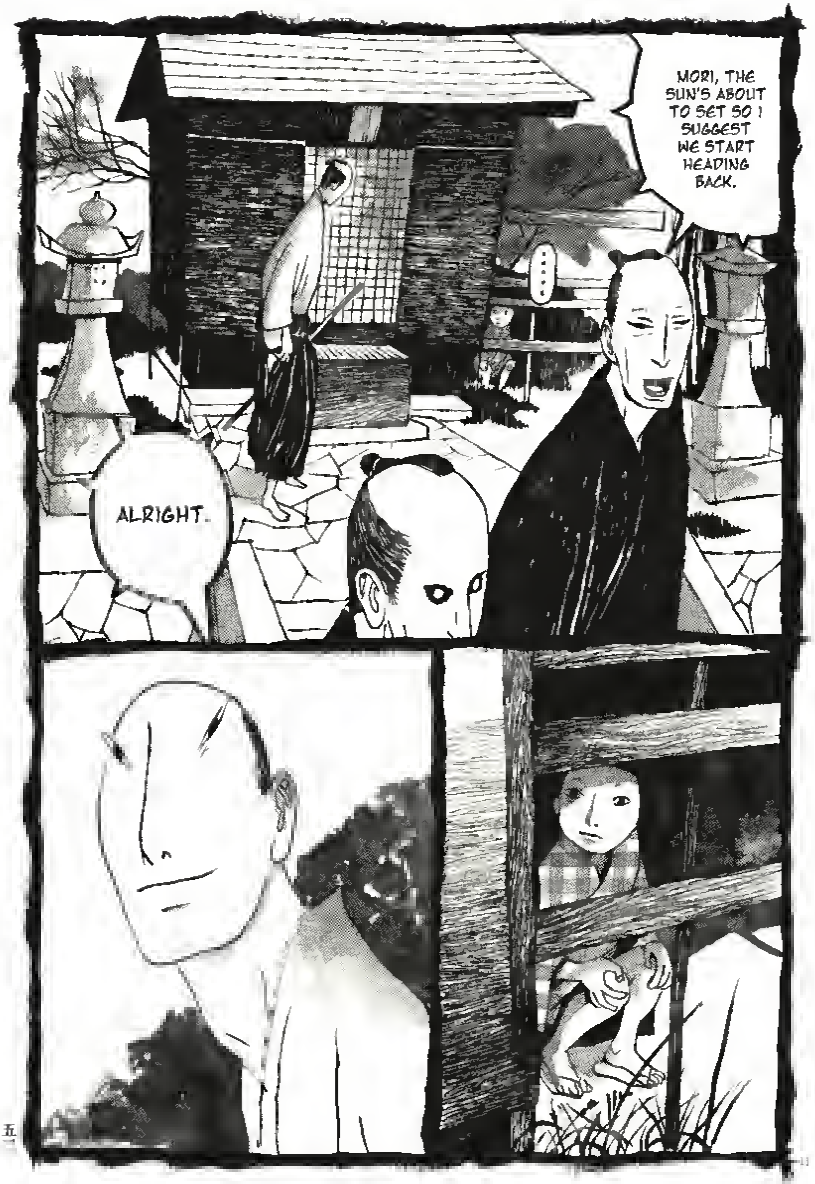
*TSUBAZERIAI: WHEN TWO SWORDSMAN HAVE THEIR SWORDS CROSSED AND COME ALMOST FACE TO FACE WITH EACH SIDE PUSHING THE OTHER BY THE GUARD (TSUBA) OF THEIR SWORDS

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU FIRST BLOCK YOUR OPPONENT'S MOVEMENT.
FOR INSTANCE YOU CAN BLOCK HIM WITH YOUR FIST...
LIKE THIS!
LIKE THIS?
STEP
LET US SWITCH, SENOU. GO TAKE A BRIEF BREAK
TA

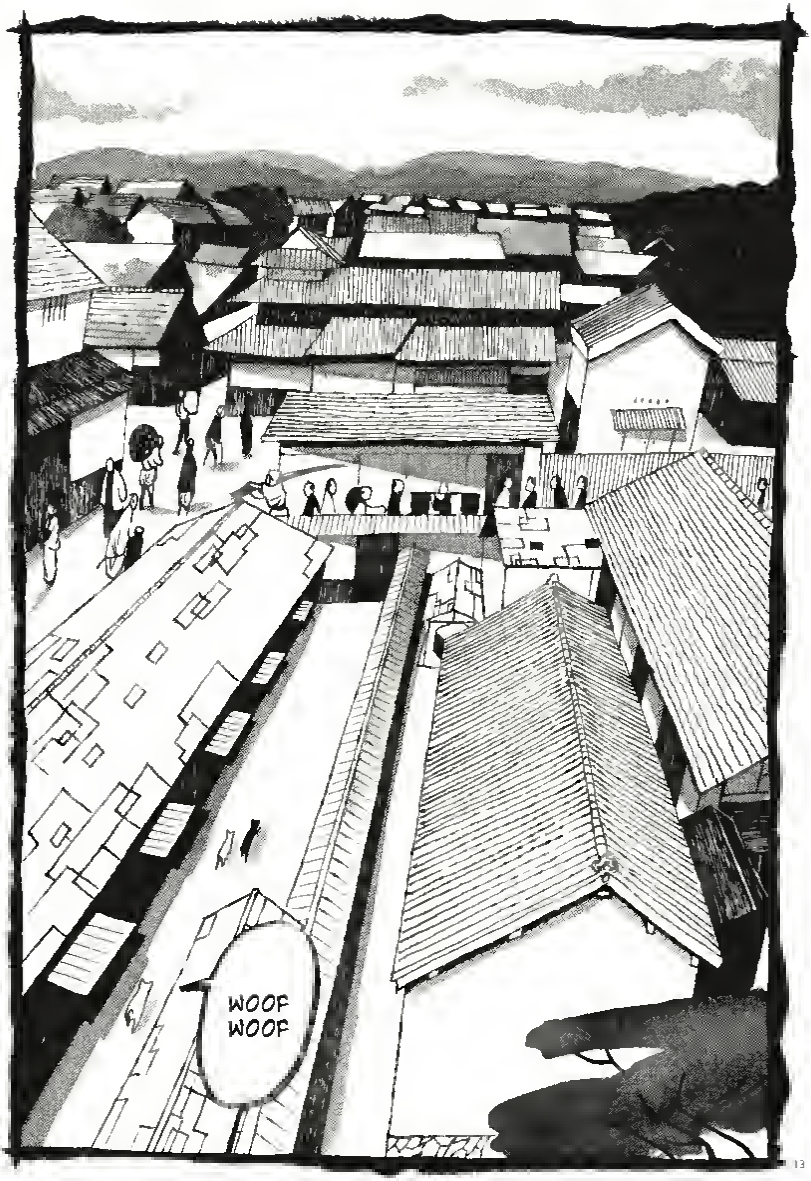
WHEW.
THANKS TO YOU, EVERYONE'S IMPROVED ALMOST BEYOND RECOGNITION.
YES.
ALL THANKS TO YOUR SPLENDID FUNDAMENTAL EXERCISES
NOW WE NEEDN'T BE TOO SCARED BY A SINGLE ASSASSIN.
ON THE OTHER HAND, MORI MIGHT BE GOOD AT FIGHTING BUT HE'S QUITE SUBPAR AT TEACHING
AS SOON AS THE WHAM! HAPPENS, YOU HIT BACK WITH THE THWACK!

I HAVEN'T DETECTED ANY PRESENCE OF HIM FOR SOME TIME NOW...
DO YOU NOT THINK HE'LL COME, MOCHIZUKI?
BUT WILL KIKUCHI REALLY COME?
WELL UHH I HEARD THAT HE WAS ORIGINALLY JUST A PEASANT...
WHO, HIM? DISCIPLINED? HA!
HIS THIRST FOR BLOOD IS WELL HIDDEN BY HIS TRAINING AND DISCIPLINE.
IN ANY CASE WE MUST TRAIN FOR NOW, KAMEI.

YES, THAT'S IT.
BY THE WAY, I HAPPENED TO DETECT A RATHER CUTE PRESENCE BEHIND MY BACK FOR SOME TIME NOW.
THAT'S RIGHT, THAT'S RIGHT.
YOU DON'T ALWAYS HAVE TO BE WITH US.
YOU SHOULD GO VISIT THE LOCAL SCHOOL EVERY NOW AND THEN, SENOU
YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO BE HAUNTED BY BRATS


MORI, THE SUN'S ABOUT TO SET SO I SUGGEST WE START HEADING BACK.
ALRIGHT.

キャン
キャン
キャン


WOOF
WOOF

555
555
555
555

HEY BOSS, I WANNA SEE YOUR BICEPS.
CLINK
GYOHO
GONNA CUT DOWN EVERYONE IN THE WORLD?
WHA'CHA GON' DO BY POLISHING ALL THEM SWORDS, BOSS?
STEP
C'MON, BOSS! SHOWWW MEEEE!
じゃ
じゃ
じゃ
AH...

SHUT UP!
HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU TO KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT WHEN I'M HANDLING MY SWORDS!?
ゴゴゴゴ
ゴゴゴゴ
ゴゴゴゴ

ざあああ
DAMMIT!
BOSS IS A BIG DUMMY!
SSS
BOSS SHOULD JUST CUT HIMSELF UP!
SSS
SSS
AND GO TO THE NETHER-WORLD!
SSS

JUST KILL YERSELF AND BEGONE, YOU BIG DUMMY!
INTO THE PITCH BLACK OBLIVION WITH YOU!
GYOHO!

CHAPTER 64

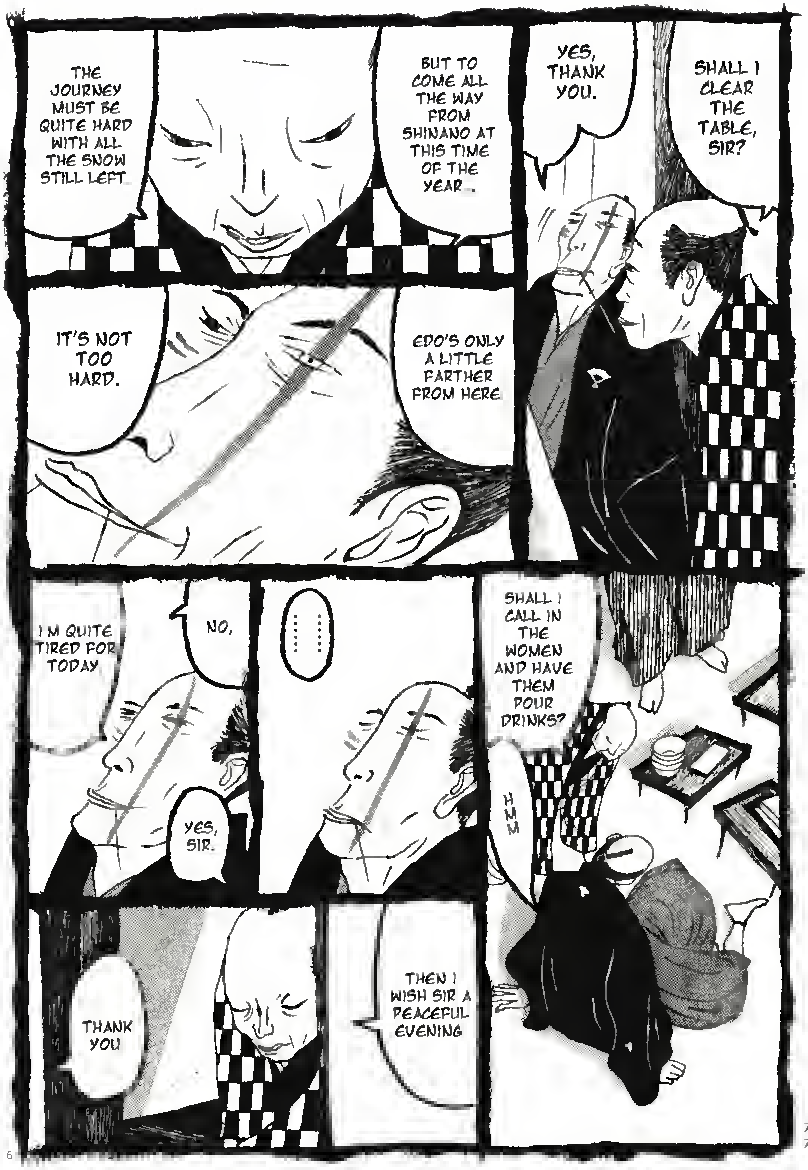
RAIN

I WAS THE ONE WHO BROUGHT THIS SHOGI BOARD!
EDO
THE SCHOOL THAT SOUICHIROU HAD NOT VISITED IN A LONG WHILE WAS ROWDIER THAN USUAL.
LONG TIME NO SEE, TEACHER.
BUT I WAS THE ONE WHO BROUGHT SOU TO SCHOOL.
IF YOU WANTED TO PLAY, THEN YOU SHOULD HAVE GOTTEN YOUR OWN BOARD.
HA HA HA HA HA
HAVE YOU BEEN TOO BUSY HANGING OUT WITH KATSU FROM THE ARCHERY RANGE?

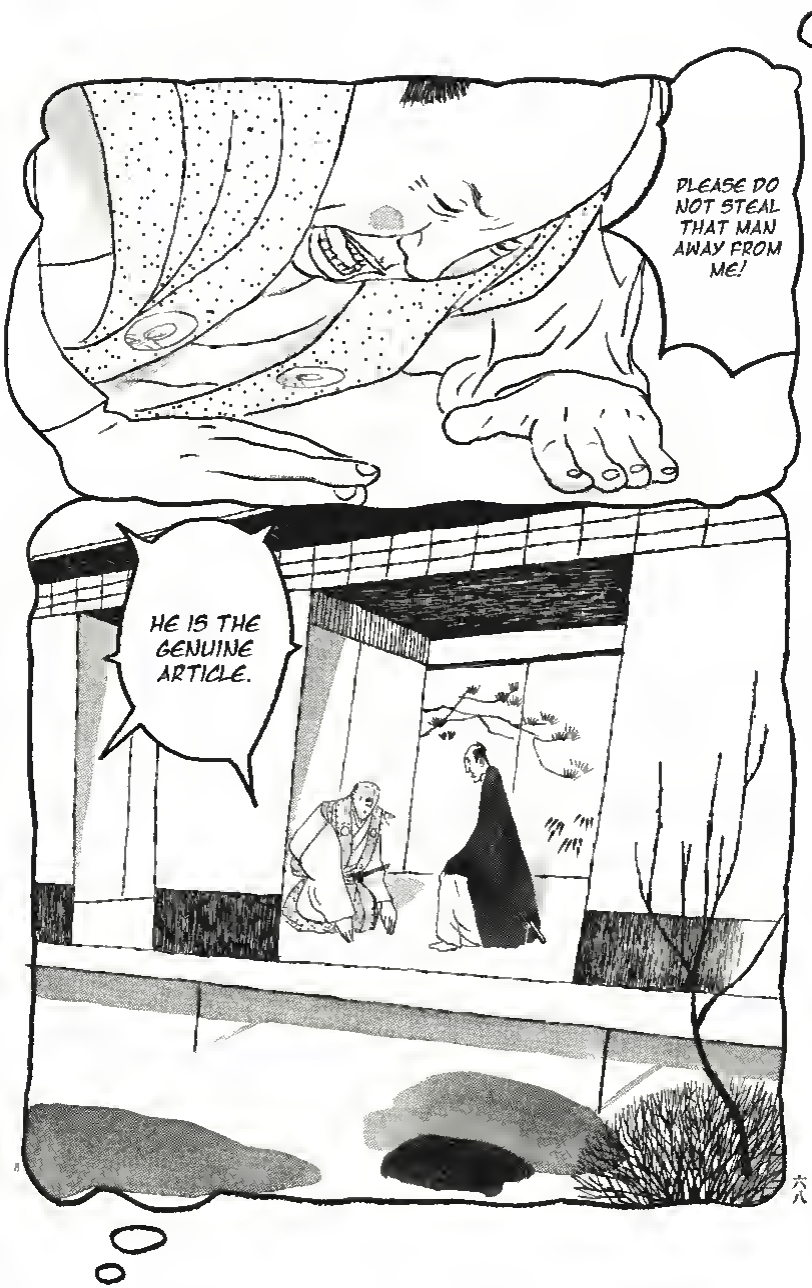
IT'S RATHER TROUBLING IF YOU COME ALL OF A SUDDEN WITHOUT ANY NOTICE.
YOSHIBOU, YOU NEED TO STOP PICKING YOUR NOSE IT'S A BAD HABIT.
COME ON, YOU CAN TELL ME THE TRUTH
KAN, DON'T GO AROUND HITTING OTHER KIDS!
OH, I ONLY CAME TO PLAY WITH THE CHILDREN A BIT.
IF YOU LET ME KNOW EARLIER THEN I WOULDN'T HAVE COME TODAY.
TEACHERRR! KANKICHI'S TRYIN TO HIT ME!
I'M NOT THE ONE AT FAULT HERE!

THE KIDS ARE IMPOSSIBLE TO CALM DOWN WHEN YOU'RE HERE.
THE SCHOOL IS DIFFERENT FROM THE 2ND FLOOR OF THE PUBLIC BATH HOUSE
YOU WANNA GO?
OH? THUNDER IN THE SPRING?
THUNDER!
PERHAPS WE'LL HAVE SOME RAINFALL AS WELL.
THUNDER!
THUNDER!
THUNDER!

KOUSHUU PROVINCE, IN THE OUT-SKIRTS OF OOTSUKI
WHEW,
I ATE QUITE A BIT.


THE JOURNEY MUST BE QUITE HARD WITH ALL THE SNOW STILL LEFT.
BUT TO COME ALL THE WAY FROM SHINANO AT THIS TIME OF THE YEAR...
IT'S NOT TOO HARD.
EDO'S ONLY A LITTLE FARTHER FROM HERE.
YES, THANK YOU.
SHALL I CLEAR THE TABLE, SIR?
I'M QUITE TIRED FOR TODAY
NO,
.....
YES, SIR.
SHALL I CALL IN THE WOMEN AND HAVE THEM POUR DRINKS?
HMM
THANK YOU
THEN I WISH SIR A PEACEFUL EVENING

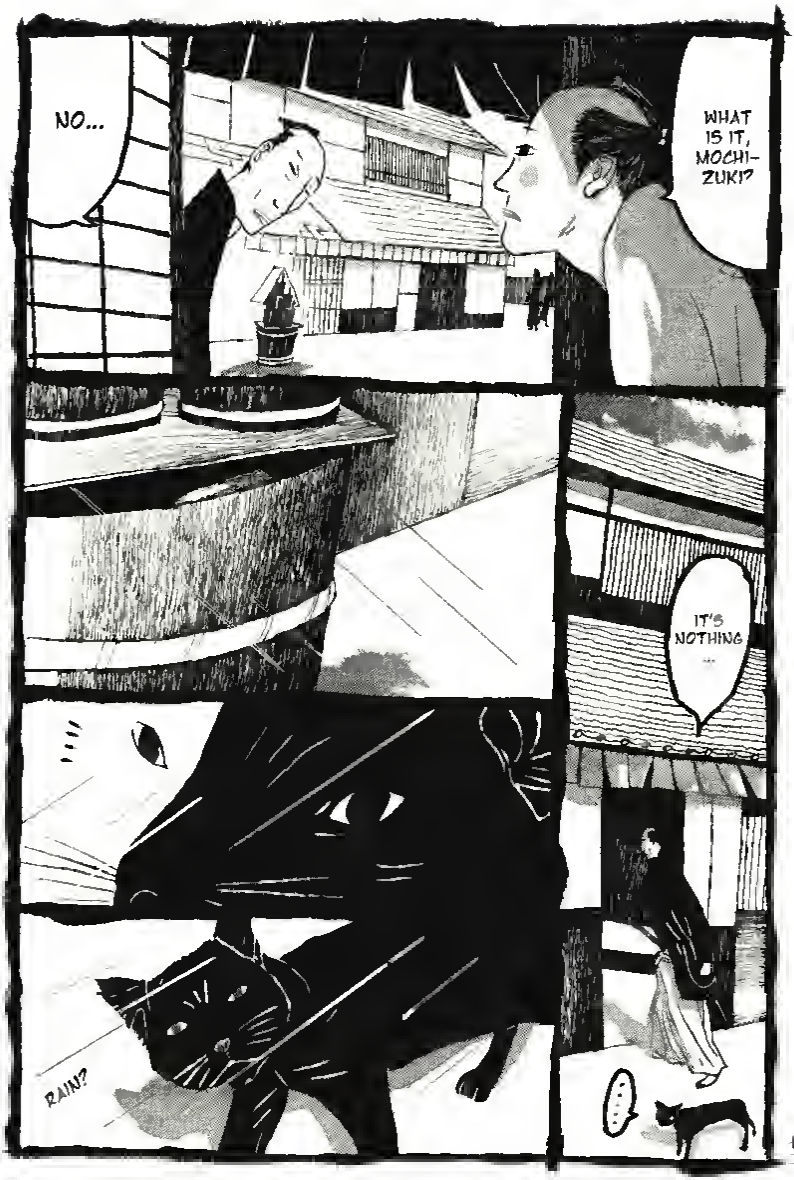
CHIRP CHIRP
I BEG OF YOU, JUUZOU!


PLEASE DO NOT STEAL THAT MAN AWAY FROM ME!
HE IS THE GENUINE ARTICLE.

INN-
KEEPER!
HEY!
ARE YOU
THERE!?
YES?
BRING IN THE
WOMEN AND
DRINKS
IMMEDIATELY!

I DON'T CARE TOO MUCH ABOUT LOOKS, JUST CALL OVER THE MOST LIVELY AND CHEERFUL GIRLS!
BACK TO EDO
MY APOLOGIES FOR ARRIVING LATE
NO, NOT AT ALL.

SEEMS LIKE THERE'S A GREAT RAINSTORM COMING.
YES.
THE CLOUDS ARE FLYING QUITE LOW.
HM?
YES.
THEN IT'D BE BEST TO HEAD INSIDE BEFORE IT RAINS.

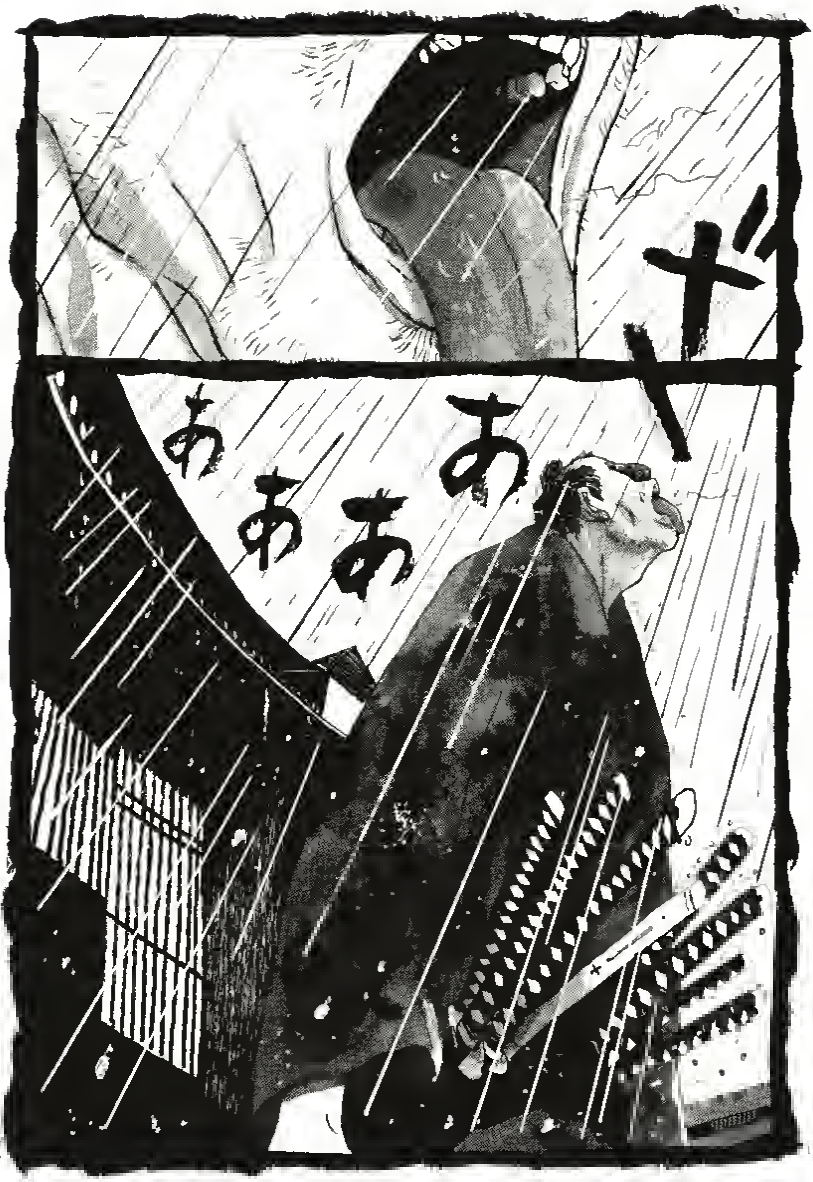

NO...
WHAT IS IT, MOCHI-ZUKI?
IT'S NOTHING ...
RAIN?

IT'S STARTING TO POUR DOWN HARD
あ
あ
あ

BAIT OUT,
THAT PESKY,
BAIT IT OUT~
FOX~
HEYA!
HEYA!

SLIDE...
SLIDE...

CLINK
ヤ"あお
あお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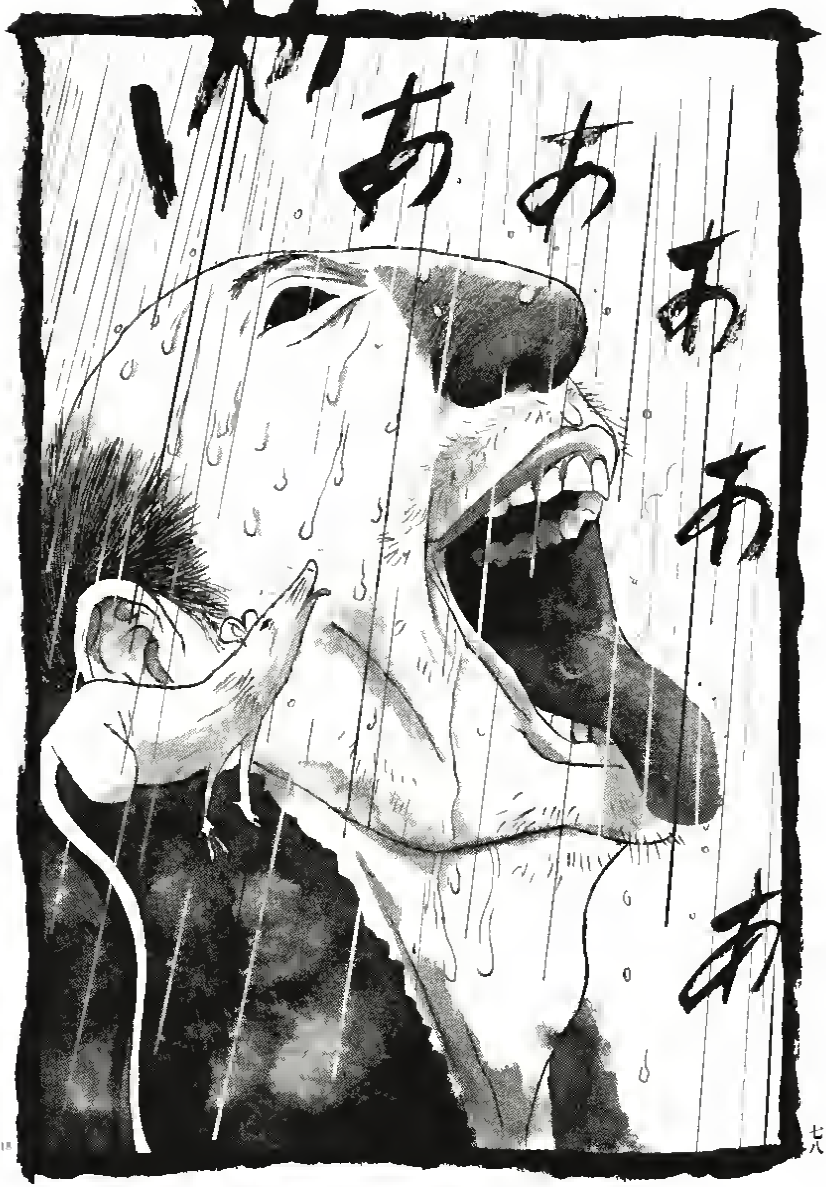
あああ


あああああ

THE RAIN'S NOT STOPPING...
IT'LL BE DIFFICULT TO GO BACK IN THIS WEATHER...
POURING QUITE HARD, ISN'T IT?
YES.
MAY I HAVE A CUP OF WATER?
YES, OF COURSE.
CHAPTER 65
FLOWER

ヤッホー
あー
あ

HM?
SOU, IT'S HARD TO HEAR YOU SPEAK.
WELL, GATHER AROUND CLOSER THEN.
GOING BACK TO THE STORY...
THE ARROW SHOT BY THE YOUNG MAN SOARED UP, UP, UP INTO THE SKY...

WHERE IT PIERCED THE DRAGON'S LEFT EYE DIRECTLY.
ARE THESE MIYAKO-WASURE FLOWERS?
MY MOTHER RAISED THESE BACK IN MY HOMETOWN.
WHY YES.

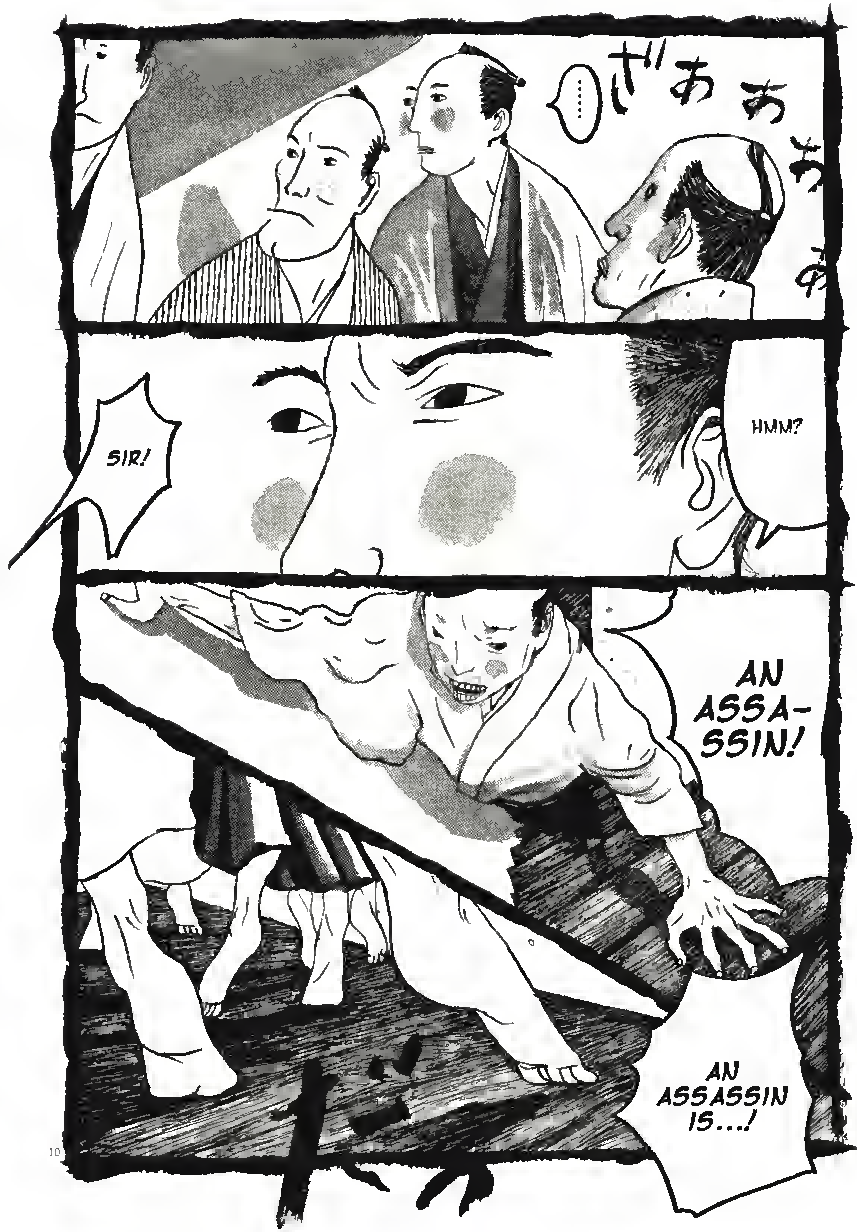
FLOOR
IT WAS MY WIFE WHO BOUGHT THEM FROM THE MARKET
STEP
HA HA HA
OF COURSE IT'S ME THAT HAS TO TAKE CARE OF THEM IN THE END

IT'S COMING DOWN EVEN HARDER.
OH, THAT LAZY WIFE OF MINE.

GRIP
GYAAA!

MNN!

ナムサン
あああ
どっ
UOOHHH!

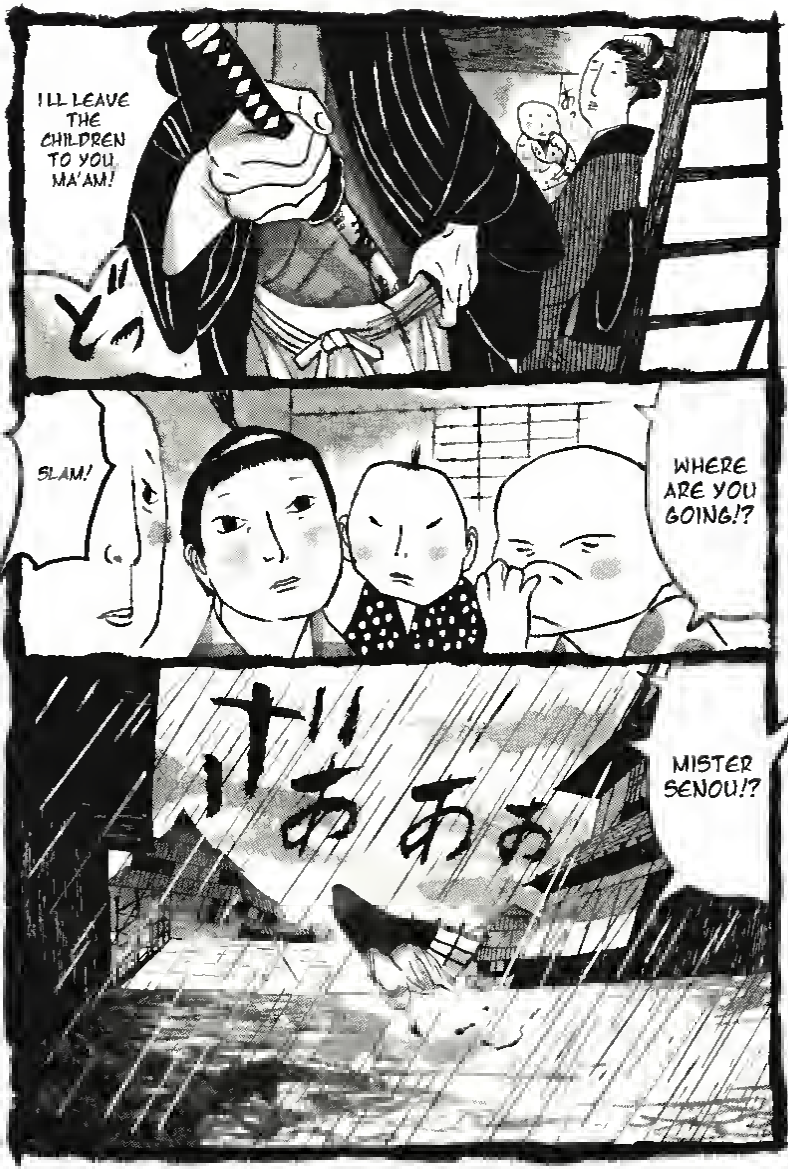

のばあああ
HMM?
SIR!
AN ASSA-SSIN!
AN ASSASSIN IS...!

MOCHI-
ZUKI!

I LOVE THE RAIN...
!?
y...
WHEN THE DRY CRACKED GROUND TURNS TO WET, BLACK MUD, MY HEART IS AT EASE...

KIKU-
CHI!!!
ARGHHHH

PARDON ME,
I COULDN'T HEAR YOU JUST NOW DUE TO THE NOISE MADE BY THE RAIN
ざあざあ
WELL, I WAS SAYING,
THE RAIN MIGHT NOT STOP ANYTIME SOON.
SO PERHAPS WE OUGHT TO SEND THE CHILDREN HOME BEFORE THE SUN SETS.
I SEE.
おおお
RAIN...


I'LL LEAVE THE CHILDREN TO YOU, MA'AM!
どっ
あ
SLAM!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING!?
ばあああ
MISTER SENOU!?

DAMN...
DAMN IT...!

ああああ

CHAPTER 66 DEMON OF DARKNESS

HHH
HHH
OH
HH

GAHH!
ぎゃあ
あ
あ あ
STEP
きゃ
HE'S HEADING UPSTAIRS!

AHH...
AH...
DON'T BE AFRAID, OOKUBO!
TCH.

OOKUBO!
1 OHT

だっ
だっ
だっ
KICK
!!

AGH!
YAMA-
MOTO!

OHHHH
カッ

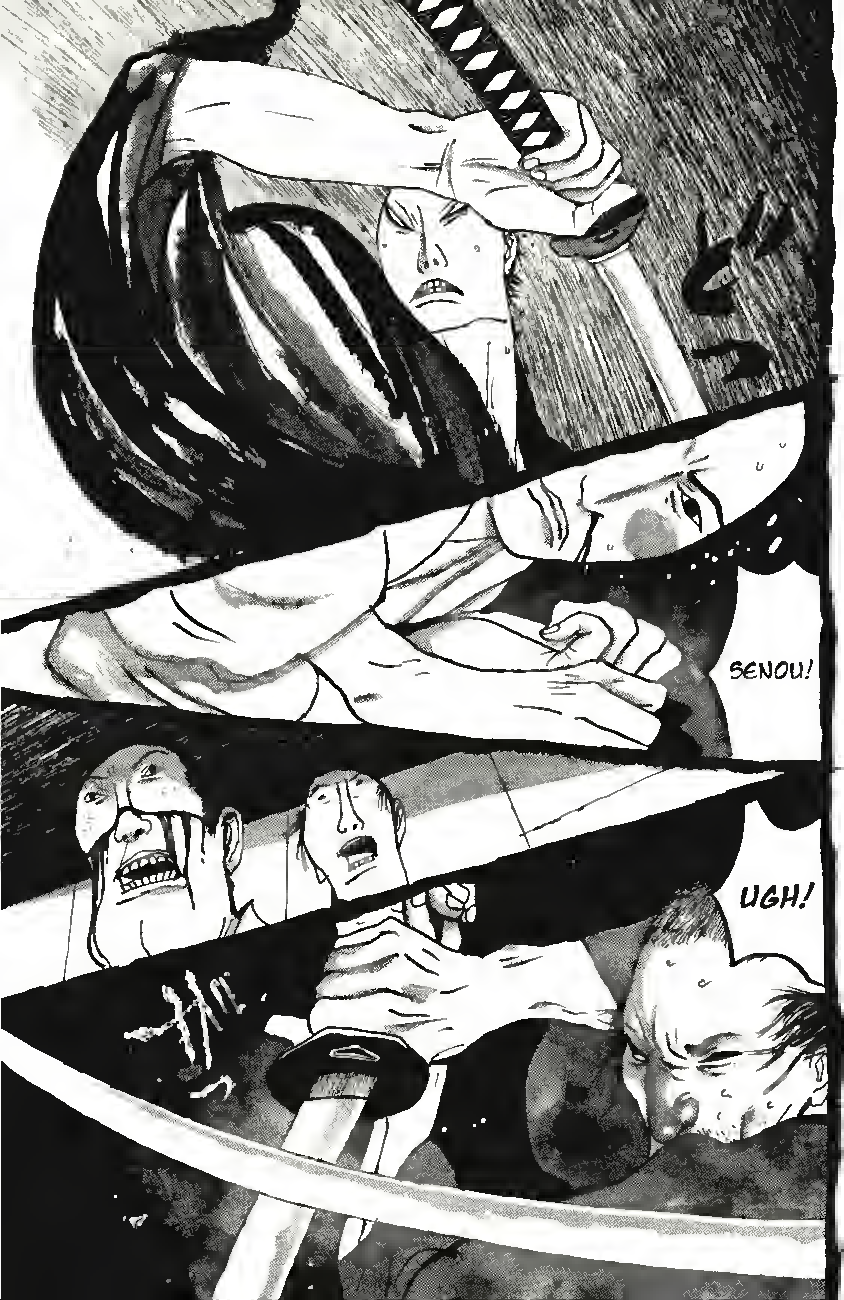
MN!
SIR!

FUH!
GAHH!

DASH
NGHH!
!
SHING

CHAPTER 69

SCUFFLE AT THE APOTHECARY


SENOU!
UGH!

MN!
GAH!

HSS!
DAH

ザッ

…

ナ…
ン…
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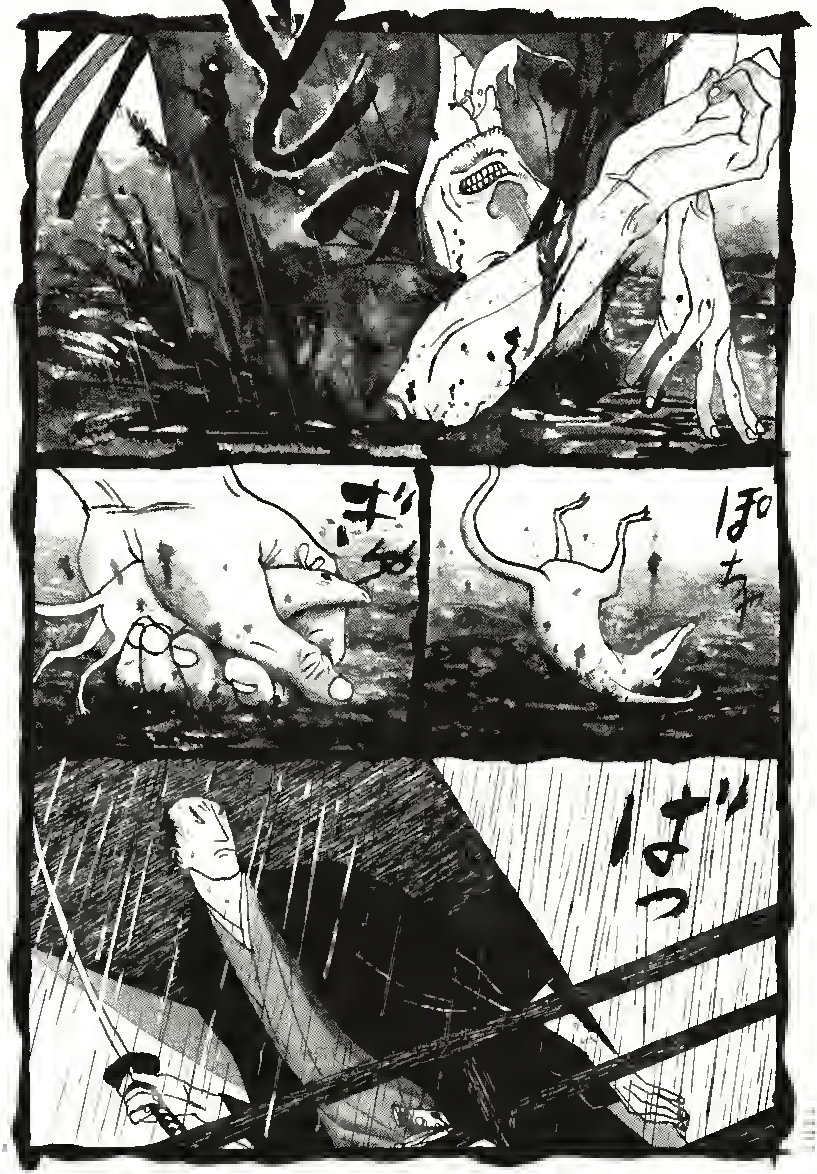
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ヤバ
あああああ
ちゃ

SHOP-KEEP!
おい
おい
YES...?
PLEASE GO TO THE SHIRAKABE TENEMENTS AND CALL A DOCTOR NAMED JOUGEN.
YES.
AS FOR THOSE WHO HAVE SLASH WOUNDS, REFRAIN FROM MOVING!
EVEN IF THE CUT IS SMALL THE WOUND CAN STILL BE QUITE SERIOUS!
YOU MUST TAKE GREAT CARES TO ALLOW YOUR BODY TO HEAL PROPERLY!

FOR THOSE WHO CAN MOVE, GO BOIL UP SOME WATER!
THE MORE, THE BETTER!
RIGHT AWAY!
ああああ

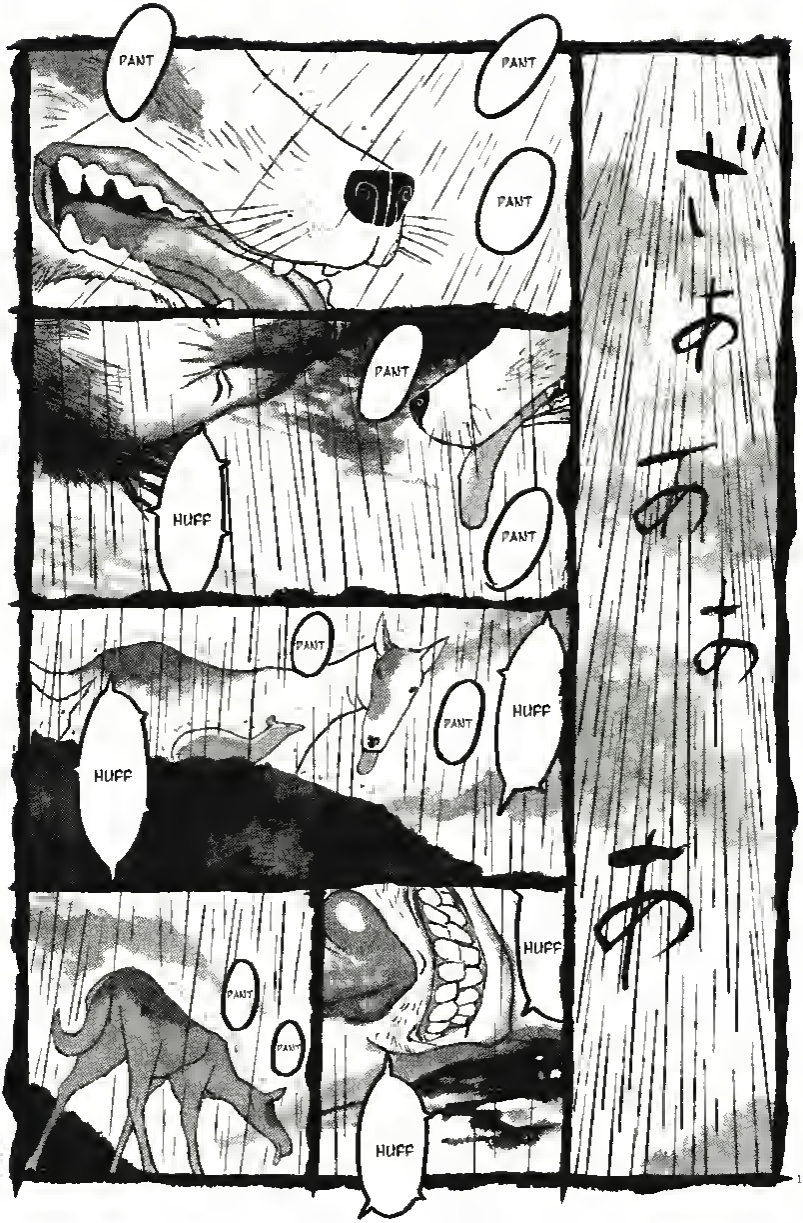
ズ・・・ああああ
BEFORE SHE PASSED AWAY, MY MOTHER ONCE SAID TO ME THAT SUKHAVATI OF THE AFTERWORLD IS A PLACE WITHOUT SUFFERING.

A LAND OF OVERFLOWING COMPASSION WHERE YOU'RE SURROUNDED BY SOFT, WARM LIGHT...
IT IS MOST CERTAINLY A LAND OF CAREFREE COMFORT.

MORI, MAY I ASK THAT YOU MAKE THE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS TO THE BEREAVED FAMILIES SO THEY NEED NOT UNDERGO FURTHER SUFFERING?
YES,
I SHALL TRY MY BEST.
PLEASE DO.

SLIDE
TAP

YES.
ざあああ


PANT
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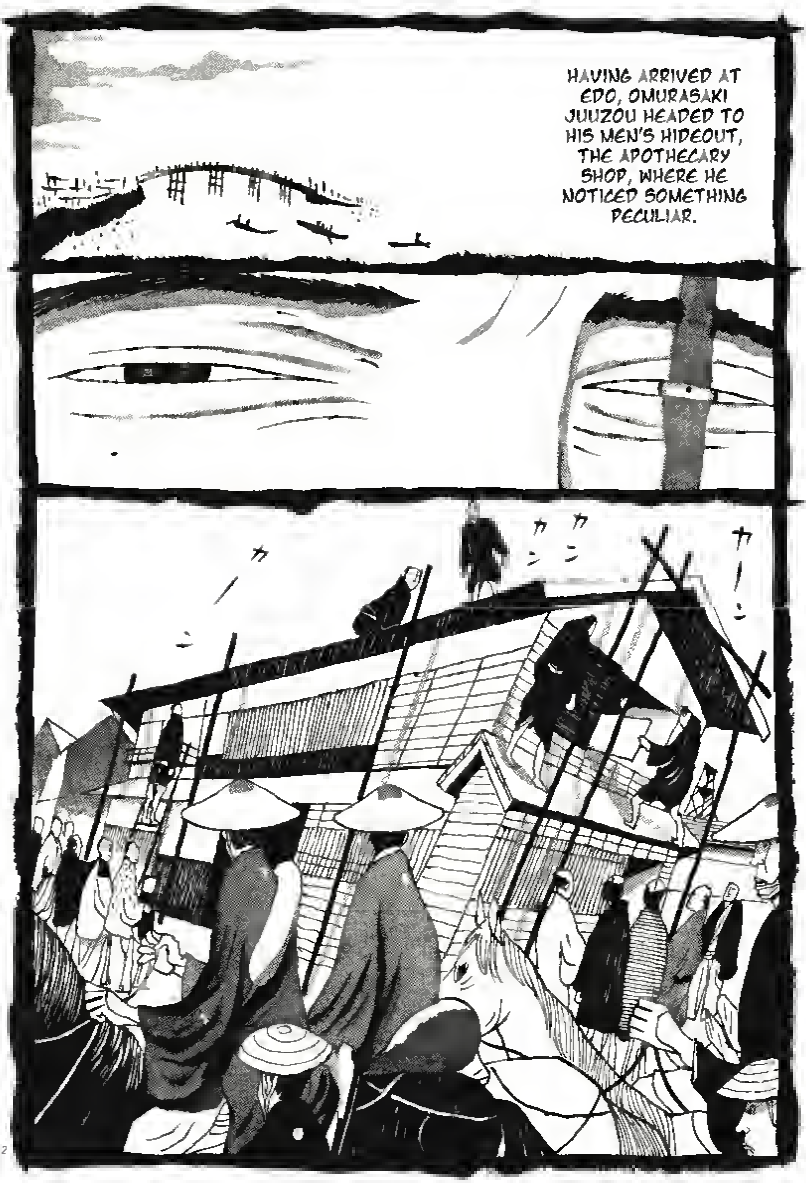
CHAPTER 68

MORI SAZATAROU'S DECISION


HAVING ARRIVED AT EDO, OMURASAKI JUUZOU HEADED TO HIS MEN'S HIDEOUT, THE APOTHECARY SHOP, WHERE HE NOTICED SOMETHING PECULIAR.
カーン
カンカンカーン

WHAT HAPPENED HERE, SADAE-MON?
AH, SIR OMURA-SAKI! YOU'VE COME TO EDO?
!
HMM...
WELL...

U... GH...
ちちち
ちちち

BZZ
BZZ
WA...
TER...
B... RING
ME...
WATER...
HM?
IF Y'WANT
ME TO BRING
WATER, I
WANNA SEE
DEM BICEPS!
BICEPS!

GYOHO!
WATER
HUP.
.....
WATER!
GYOHOHO!
WATER...

THAT MUST'VE BEEN QUITE THE CALAMITY.
I SHALL MAKE SURE THE BEREAVED FAMILIES ARE TAKEN CARE OF SO DO NOT WORRY ABOUT THAT.
AH, MORI.
HAVE YOU BEEN WELL?
THE FAULT LIES FULLY WITH ME, SIR.

THUS, I SHALL ACCEPT FULL RESPONSIBILITY.

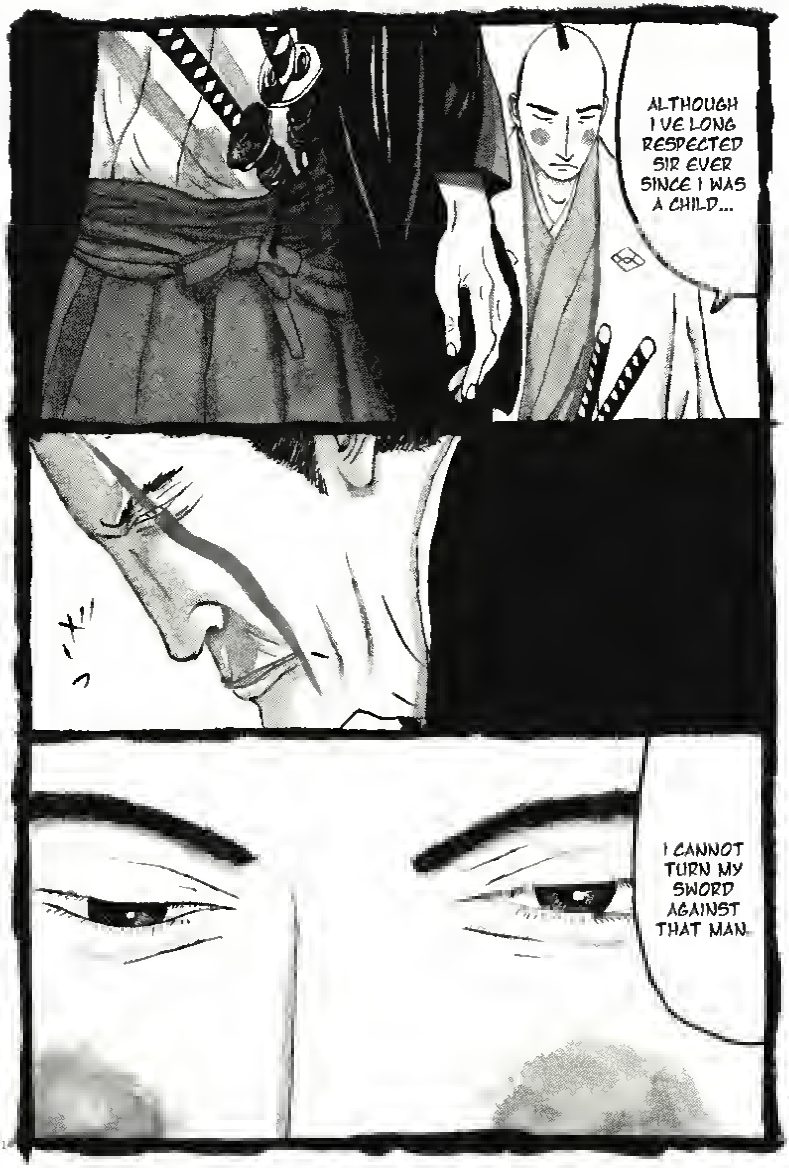
NOW, NOW, THIS IS NOTHING FOR YOU GENTLEMEN TO BE AGITATED ABOUT.
YOU ACTED COWARDLY BECAUSE YOU LET THE FLATTERY OF YOUR SUBORDINATES GET TO YOUR HEAD.
YOU'VE MADE SIR OMURASAKI COME ALL THE WAY TO EDO IN THIS COLD SEASON, ALL BECAUSE OF YOUR INEPTITUDE!
THE FAULT LIES ONLY WITHIN ME, JUUZOU, FOR BEING AN INCOMPETENT SUPERIOR
I MUST TAKE A BATH FOR NOW.
WE CAN CONTINUE OUR TALK AFTER THAT.

HAHAHAHA!
SHE SAYS SHE WON'T FORGIVE YOU IF YOU CHEAT ON HER.
BY THE WAY, MY DAUGTHER SAE WANTED TO PASS ALONG A MESSAGE TO YOU, MORI
...
NOTHING, SIR.
WHAT!?
オケキョ
ガーン

HAHA!
ばしゃ
ばしゃ
DON'T HURT THE KOI CARPS, THEY'RE EXPENSIVE!
WHAT! IT AIN'T LIKE WE'RE GONNA EAT'EM!
ガハハ
I WANT TO TRY NEXT!
HA...
GIVE IT!
.....

EVEN A MONKEY WOULD BE SMARTER THAN THOSE FOOLS
HMP
BZZ
MOSQUITOS ALREADY?
IN EDO, THE MOSQUITOS ARE AROUND ALL YEAR-LONG.
WELL, MOSQUITOS ARE FINE, BUT WHAT I AM CONCERNED WITH IS THAT CERTAIN SMELL I SENSED WHEN ENTERING THIS CITY
AND I CANNOT REST UNTIL THAT MATTER IS CLEARED UP

SO YOU'VE COME TO KILL SENGU SOUICHI-ROU ONCE AND FOR ALL, SIR?
DID YOU THINK I CAME ALL THE WAY TO HELP OUT THOSE MEN WITH THE HOUSE-WORK?
STOP SHOVING YOU IDIOT!
NEEDLESS TO SAY, I'LL BE COUNTING ON YOUR HELP, MORI.


ALTHOUGH I'VE LONG RESPECTED SIR EVER SINCE I WAS A CHILD...
I CANNOT TURN MY SWORD AGAINST THAT MAN.

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でかい
でかい
IS IT TO REPAY HIM FOR SAVING YOUR LIFE?
PERHAPS.
THAT MAN'S A TRUE DEMON!
IF IT WERE POSSIBLE IN ANY WAY..

I TRULY WISH THAT I COULD HAVE REMAINED AS SIR'S FAITHFUL MORI SAZATAROU FOREVER.

す…
……
yes…
HEY, SAZATAROU! C'MERE AND JOIN THE FUN!

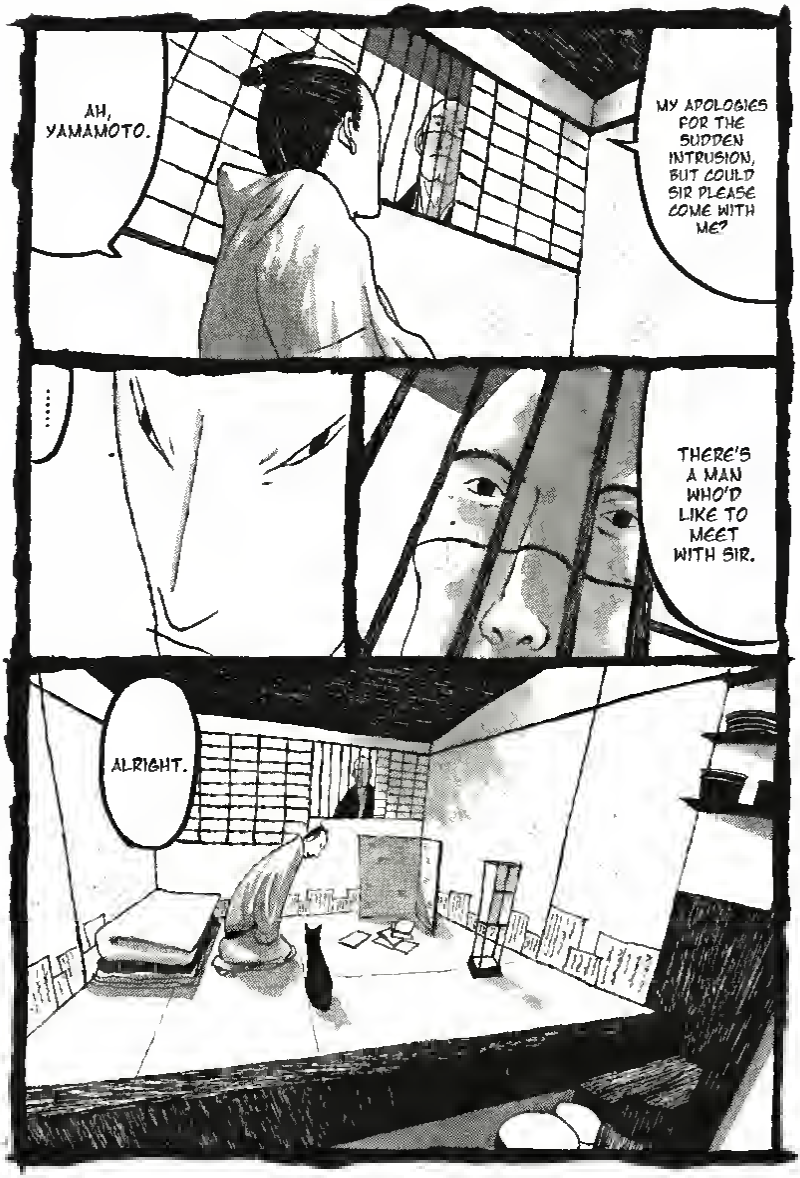
ぷっ…
ひひひ
ぷっ…ぅん
DAMN IT!

CHAPTER 69

MAN ON THE BOAT

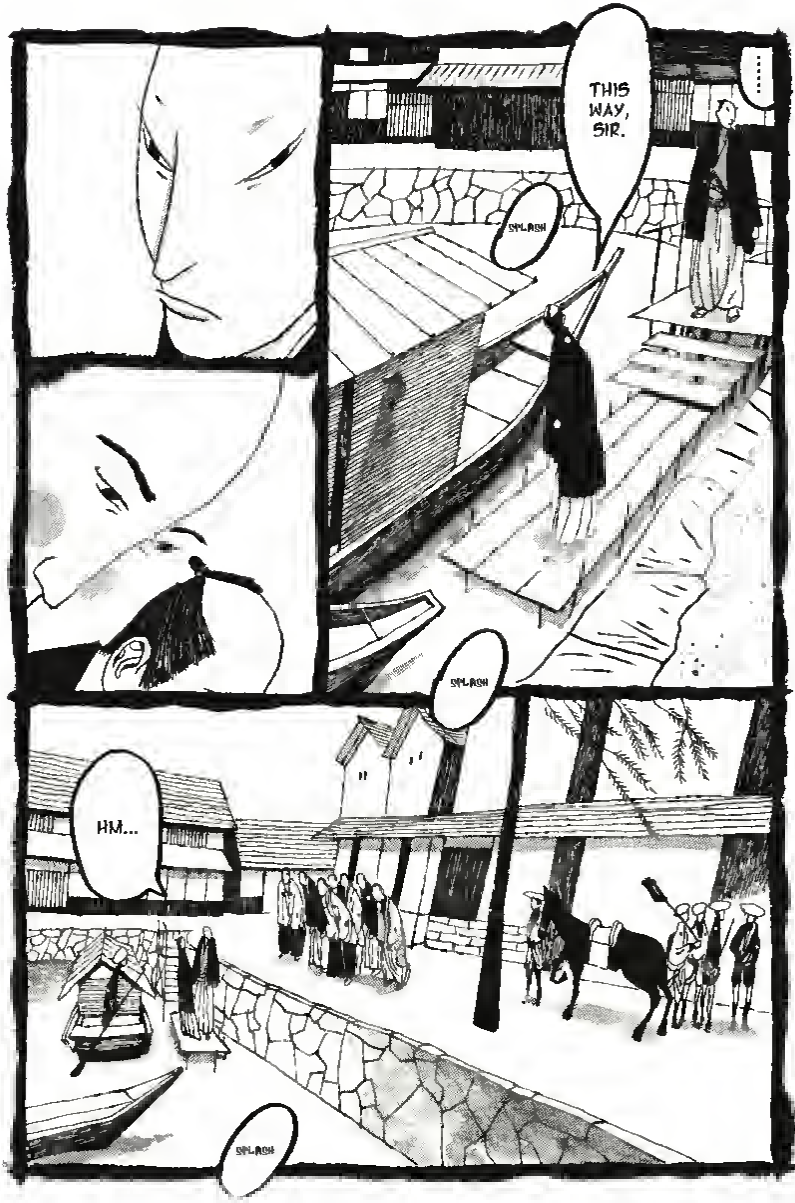
I'M THINKING OF TRAVELLING UPSTREAM TO GO SEE THE WATERFALL THAT THE BLACK DOG TALKED ABOUT.
HMM.
NO. WOMEN AREN'T MEANT FOR TRAVELS.
WILL YOU BE GOING WITH THAT CAT YOU'RE ALWAYS WITH?

IT'D BE NICE TO BRING HER ALONG.
LOOK, WHAT I WANT TO ASK IS WHAT YOU'LL DO.
YOU REEK TOO MUCH OF BLOOD TO LIVE IN A TOWN LIKE THIS.
AM I WRONG?
HMM...
IN SHORT, I'M OFFERING YOU AN INVITATION TO COME ALONG WITH ME
カリ
ピク


AH, YAMAMOTO.
MY APOLOGIES FOR THE SUDDEN INTRUSION, BUT COULD SIR PLEASE COME WITH ME?
.....
THERE'S A MAN WHO'D LIKE TO MEET WITH SIR.
ALRIGHT.

.....
EVEN NOW, MY ENTIRE BODY COWERS WHEN I RECALL THE INCIDENTS OF THAT DAY.
IF SIR HADN'T COME TO OUR RESCUE, WE'D ALL HAVE BEEN KILLED FOR CERTAIN.
IS THAT WHY YOU'VE BEGUN TO ADDRESS ME AS SIR ALL OF A SUDDEN?

……
ざわあああ


THIS WAY, SIR.
SPLASH
SPLASH
HM...
SPLASH

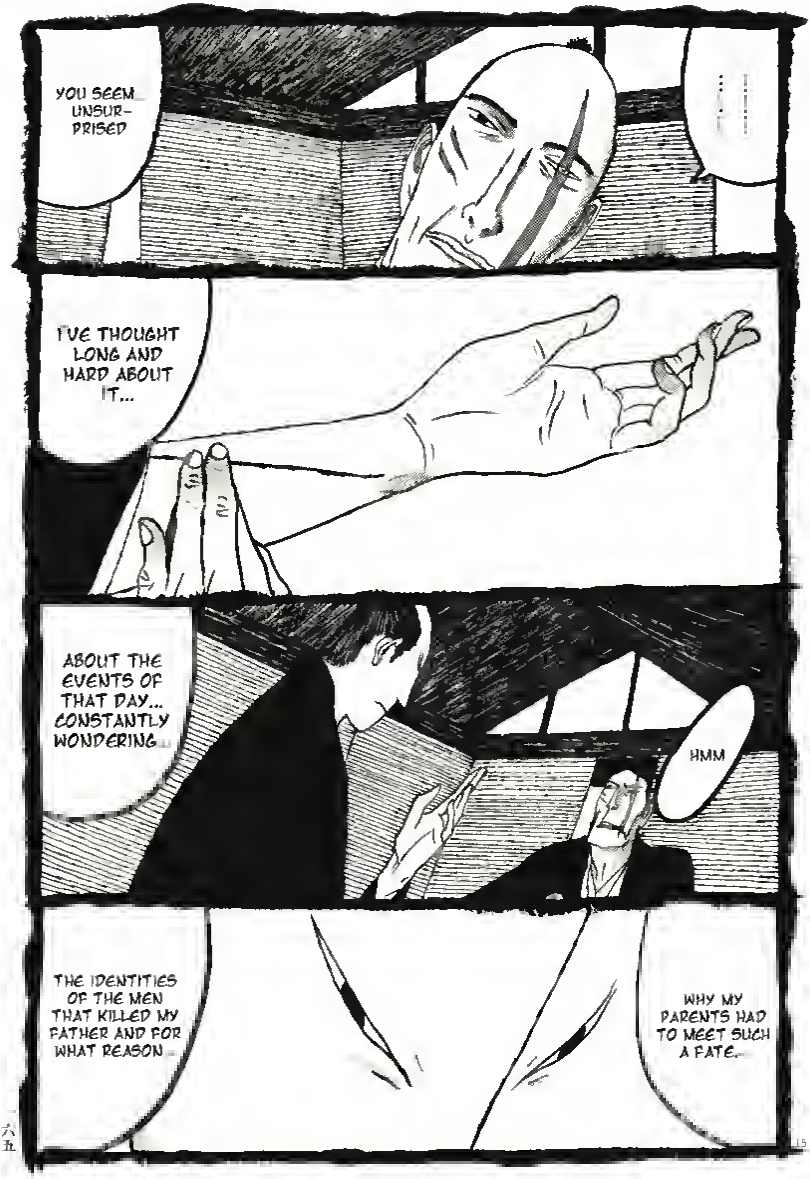
I DON'T EXPECT A YOUNG PUP LIKE YOU TO UNDERSTAND BUT WE ALL LIVE ONLY FOR A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF TIME.
I'VE DECIDED TO GO ON A TRIP.
SO AS FOR ME, I'D LIKE TO GO SEE THE WATERFALL THAT THE BLACK DOG USED TO TALK ABOUT BEFORE I DIE.

DO YOU REMEMBER THIS FACE OF MINE...?

IT IS THE FACE OF YOUR ENEMY.

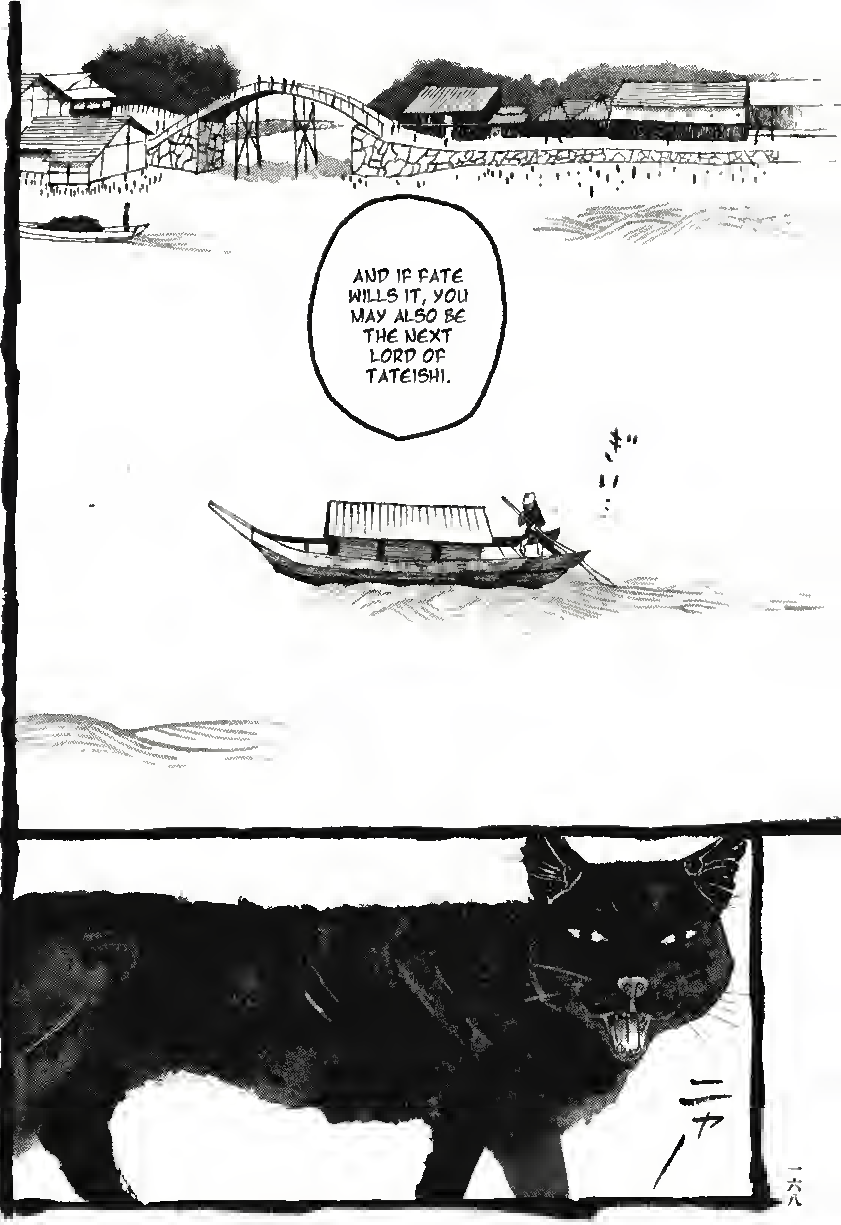
THE FACE OF THE MAN WHO KILLED YOUR PARENTS AND SET YOUR HOME ABLAZE...
THERE IS NO WAY I COULD HAVE FORGOT-TEN
THE FACE OF THE SECOND-IN-LINE KAROU, OMURA-SAKI JUUZOU.

I SEE...
ざあぁぁ
SO YOU HAD SURVIVED...
TAP

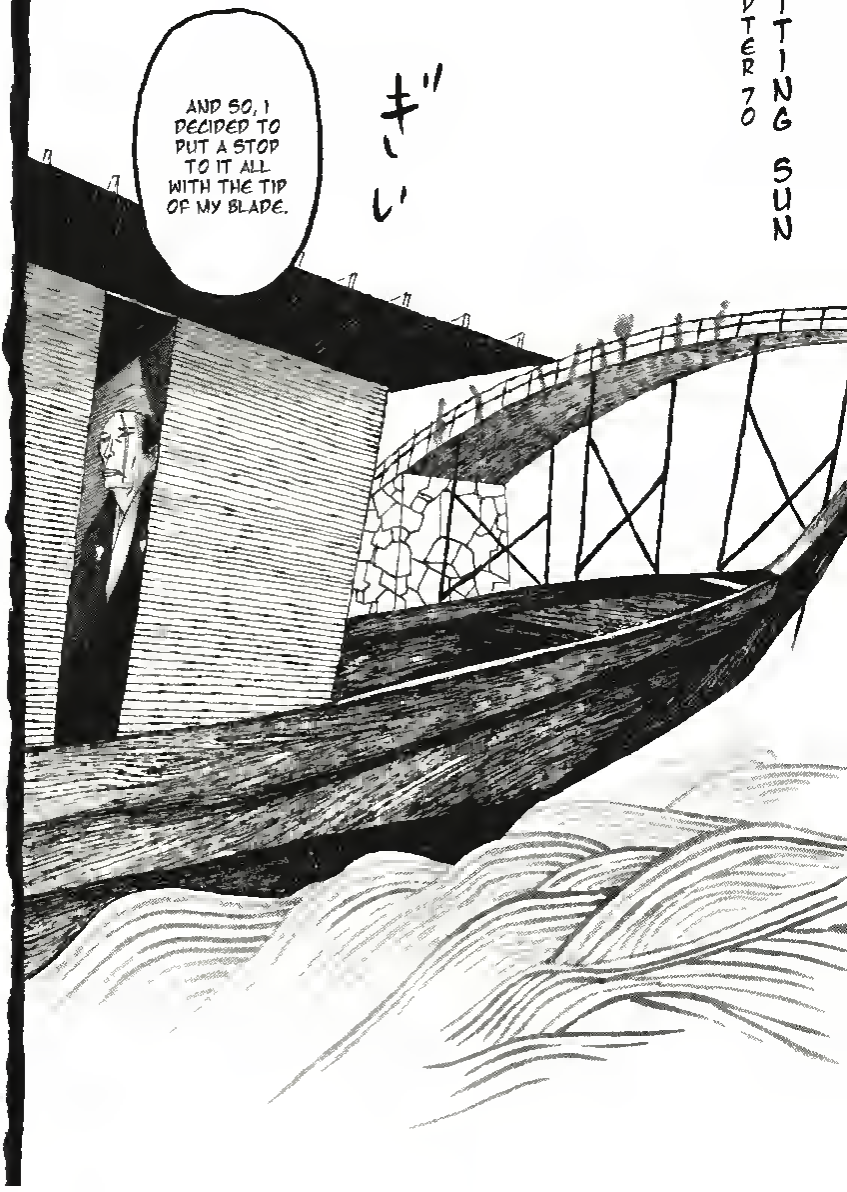

YOU SEEM UNSURPRISED
.....
I'VE THOUGHT LONG AND HARD ABOUT IT...
ABOUT THE EVENTS OF THAT DAY... CONSTANTLY WONDERING...
HMM
THE IDENTITIES OF THE MEN THAT KILLED MY FATHER AND FOR WHAT REASON...
WHY MY PARENTS HAD TO MEET SUCH A FATE...

AND WHY MY FAMILY HAD TO LIVE DEEP IN THE FOREST, SECLUDED FROM ALL OTHERS.
BUT EVER SINCE COMING TO EDO, I'VE GRADUALLY GROWN TO FEAR KNOWING THE ANSWERS BEHIND THESE QUESTIONS AND WHAT THEY MAY ENTAIL.
I WORRIED THAT IF I FOUND OUT WHY, I WOULD BE UNABLE TO CONTINUE MY CURRENT LIFE IN EDO
AND SO I TRIED MY HARDEST NOT TO THINK ABOUT IT ANYMORE
.....

YOU ARE NOT THE SON OF SENOU SOUEMON.
YOU ARE THE ILLEGITIMATE CHILD OF LORD TAKI IZUMO-NOKAMI, THE 6TH GENERATION HEAD OF THE TAKI HOUSE.
CREAK


AND IF FATE WILLS IT, YOU MAY ALSO BE THE NEXT LORD OF TATEISHI.

BECAUSE OF YOUR EXISTENCE, OUR WHOLE HOUSE FRACTURED INTO TWO MAIN FACTIONS.
NO LONGER ABLE TO TRUST ONE ANOTHER, WE RETAINERS CONSTANTLY PROBED EACH OTHER TO SEE WHERE ONE'S LOYALTIES LAY.


AND SO, I DECIDED TO PUT A STOP TO IT ALL WITH THE TIP OF MY BLADE.
ぎぃ

SUCH WERE THE REASONS BEHIND THAT DAY OF THE BLIZZARD.
TO BE PERFECTLY HONEST, I CAME TO EDO TODAY TO TRY AND KILL YOU AGAIN BUT.
I'VE DECIDED NOT TO.
GRIP
THERE ARE JUST TOO MANY MEN THAT HOLD YOU IN HIGH REGARDS, YOU SEE.

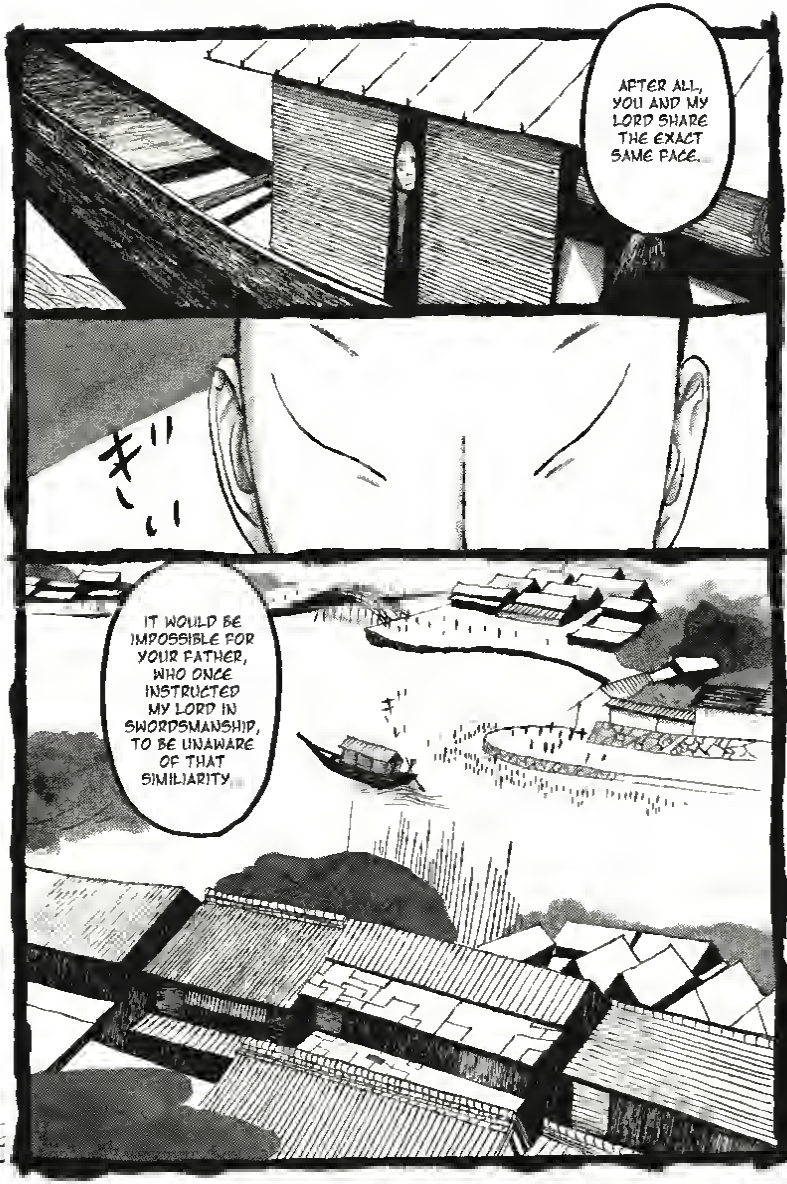
I'VE LOST MY WILL TO KILL.
CUT ME DOWN.
AS PER MY ORDERS, THE MEN ON THE SHORE SHALL NOT HARM YOU.

I'VE DECIDED THAT THE BEST WAY TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR EVERYTHING THAT HAS HAPPENED UNTIL NOW IS WITH MY PITIFUL CORPSE
SLIDE...

I KINDLY REFUSE
THERE IS NO NEED FOR MYSELF TO CUT YOU DOWN..
YOUR PAST ACTIONS WERE SELFLESS, STEMMING NOT FROM PERSONAL GREED OR AMBITION.

AND YOU NEED NOT WORRY, FOR I HAVE NO INTENTION OF BECOMING A LORD.
キィ
にゃあ
にゃあ
にゃあ
THERE IS ONE THING I WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOU
キィ

WAS MY FATHER AWARE OF MY LINEAGE?
WHICH FATHER?
.....
SENOU SOUEMON.
HE CERTAINLY MUST HAVE BEEN WELL AWARE.
YES...


AFTER ALL, YOU AND MY LORD SHARE THE EXACT SAME FACE.
きぃ
IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR YOUR FATHER, WHO ONCE INSTRUCTED MY LORD IN SWORDSMANSHIP, TO BE UNAWARE OF THAT SIMILIARITY.

HEIACHI! HEY, HEIHACHI!
YOU REMEMBER THAT LADY YOU HIT ON AT ONE OF THE TOWNS WE PASSED ON OUR WAY TO EDO?
HA HA HA HA HA
WELL SHE AIN'T NO LADY! GAHAHA!
YES, YES! HONEST, I SWEAR!

JUST DON'T BLAME ME WHEN THE ONE-EYED MONSTER COMES OUT!
……
IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME, INVITE HER TO THE BEDROOM AND SEE FOR YOURSELF!
カハハハ
わはは

*THREE-STRINGED MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

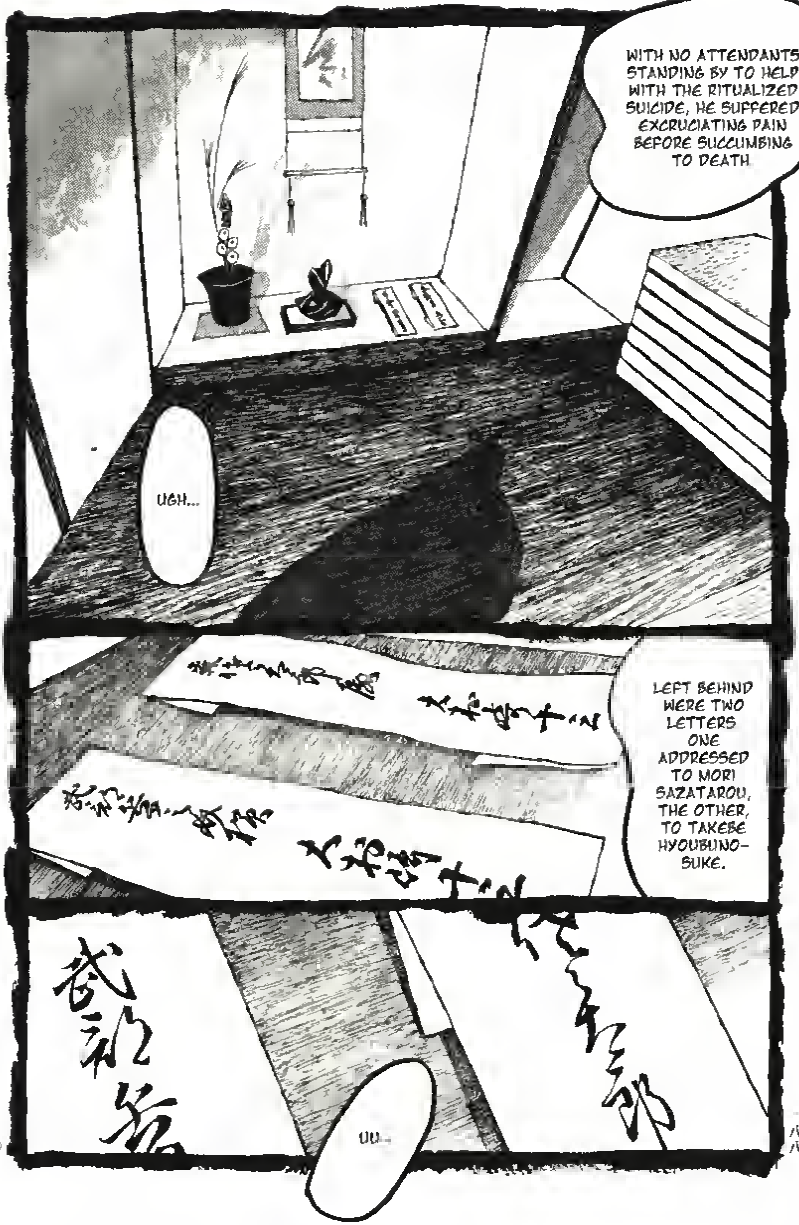
HUFF
HUFF
HA HA HA HA HA
WAIT!
RIKU
STOP RIGHT THERE!
I SAID STOP!

OH, DARN IT.
はあ
はあ
HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU NOT TO RUN OFF ON YOUR OWN?
PANT
PANT
HM?
PANT
PANT

SOU!

小松お
様御の
ふたり

UGH!
WITHOUT LETTING ANYONE KNOW, OMURASAKI JUUZOU COMMITTED SUICIDE THAT NIGHT.


WITH NO ATTENDANTS STANDING BY TO HELP WITH THE RITUALIZED SUICIDE, HE SUFFERED EXCRUCIATING PAIN BEFORE SUCCUMBING TO DEATH.
UGH...
LEFT BEHIND WERE TWO LETTERS ONE ADDRESSED TO MORI SAZATAROU, THE OTHER, TO TAKEBE HYOUBUNO-SUKE.
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GYOHO?
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TRANSLATED BY HOX

第八集へつづく……

待つべし、待つべし。

竹光侍（たけみつざむらい）

松本大洋＋永福一成

His sword must be bamboo!

［週刊ビッグコミックスピリッツ］にて鮮烈連載中!!

斬るのだ。斬り合わねばならぬのだ。
鬼の姿で世を渡る

木久地真之介。

心に鬼を押し込める

瀬能宗一郎。

二人は次巻、斬り結ぶ。
その果ての、血だまりに立つのは

剣鬼、須く（すべから）死合うべし!!

どちらの鬼か!?

大団円、大決着の
第八集に大期待せよ!!!!!!

インターネットでビッグコミックスが購入できます。http://comics.shogakukan.co.jp 小学館